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David Kahana

In the Clutch of Hatred

The Story of Jewish-Polish Relations

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FOREWORD

The Bloody Encounter, published in May 1991, dealt with the behavior of the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia during the Holocaust. This work unquestionably established the fact that despite the close neighborly relations between the Ukrainian village and the Jewish town in Eastern Galicia, old hatred was rekindled by German provocation, turning the Ukrainians into enthusiastic perpetrators of the "Final Solution."

However, as researchers we must not overlook the fact that in addition to the collaboration of the Ukrainians and other national minorities, there was a large Polish population which was also under occupation. How did they behave when the attacks upon the Jews began?

On many occasions they collaborated with the Germans in locating and handing over Jews. Most of them watched with indifference as the convoys of Jews rounded up in the Aktionen were driven to the deportation sites and then to the extermination camps. Such was the case with the Polish citizens of Lvov, who went about their daily round while streetcars drove through the city filled with Jews being rounded up for deportation to the labor camp of Janowska and the Belzec extermination camp.

Explanations and attempts at apologetics always accompany the plea that they too lived under Nazi occupation, suffering loss of life and in fear of punishment from the Germans. Others point to the Polish Righteous of the Nations and the Polish Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944 as the major expressions of resistance and assistance in the rescue of Polish Jews.

Many books have been written about the attitude of the Poles to the Jews during World War II. Most memoirs of Holocaust survivors contain beathtaking accounts of petrifying fear and terror lest they be discovered by their Polish neighbors and handed over to the Germans. Others can testify from experience: Poles did indeed hand over Jews; they hounded them cruelly. They were pleased that the Germans were doing the job for them.

And what of the attitude of the Poles towards the Jews after the war, when the entire world discovered to its horror the full extent of the Holocaust and condemned the extermination of the Jewish people, both at the Nuremberg Trial and in the process of repatriation. A scholar researching the memoirs of orphaned and childless Holocaust survivors returning to their former homes after long and arduous journies will find that the Poles now treated them as viciously as in the past and with even greater hatred and rejection, complaining bitterly, disappointed at Hitler's failure to finish the job of extermination. The more moderate and humane Poles remained silent, as they had during the dark days of the Holocaust.

David Kahana's book examines the weave of the delicate fabric of relations between the Poles and the She'erit Ha-Peletah, against a background survey of the relations between the Poles and the Jews.

Bella Gutterman

INTRODUCTION

Over a period of one thousand years the Jewish settlement in the land of the Vistula sank deep and widespreading roots into Polish soil. Of all the diasporas Poland was the only country whose Jewish settlement was deeply entrenched and attained great heights. These achievements would have grown even further, had it not been for the dreadful national tragedy of the Holocaust.

In Poland the Jewish genius revealed itself in all walks of life. Primarily a feudalistic agrarian country, Poland invited the Jews to settle in order to develop the trade and crafts which it so badly needed. However, over the generations the Jews revealed their talent and nobility of mind in all areas--commerce, politics and science.

The Jews wove themselves with thousands of strands into the fabric of Polish existence. Bound with all their might to Polish soil, they learned to love it. Traditional Orthodox Judaism flowered there, particularly after the decline in Spain, Portugal and Germany. A network of yeshivot spread throughout Poland and the sound of Torah emanated from Jewish homes. There was a Jewish street atmosphere and a Jewish way of life.

The Jewish community in Poland glowed with spiritual leaders, world renowned geonim and hasidim like the Maharshal (Solomon ben Jehiel Luria, ?1510-1574), Shakh (Shabbetai ben Meir ha-Kohen, 1621-1662), the Vilna Gaon (Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, 1720-1797) the Besht (Israel ben Eliezer Ba'al Shem Tov, c. 1700-1760). They spread their light to famous communities like Vilna (the "Jerusalem of Lithuania"), Lublin, Krakov,

Lvov, Warsaw and many others. Torah, the voice of Jacob, the world of Jewish mussar, the words of our prophets emanated from Poland. Masses of Jews absorbed these outpourings and brought them into their homes.

Jewish life in Poland was woven over a period of many generations: a life composed of grey weekdays and holy Sabbath, grey weekdays and the joy of holy days. A Jewish way of life was created which included the secular and the sacred, the melodies of Jewish folk songs, lamentations and ecstasy of Jewish dance.

Only among Polish Jewry could a popular and widespread movement like Hasidism be born--one which captured the hearts and minds of tens of thousands of Jews. Chanting the verse from Proverbs "But righteousness saves from death" they would go to funerals; they celebrated weddings to the music of klezmers and mitzvah dances.

And so it was year after year, generation after generation. And all of this was permeated with a Jewish charm. As the Jews' love for the land of Poland grew, so too did their extreme devotion to the country. Thus we can see Jewish bravery during the various periods of Polish history when they were called upon to join the loyal patriots: "for our freedom and yours...!" The Jews never hesitated. They were always the first in the Polish struggle against the common enemy, whether Tsarist Russia from the east or Prussia from the west.

This was the case with men like Berek Joselewicz (c. 1770-1809, colonel of the Polish armed forces) Rabbi Moses Zvi Hirsch Meizlisch (Meisels; 1758-1767) and many other heroes, as well as thousands of anonymous

Jewish fighters who died for Poland.

Over the generations a Jewish literature was created in Poland, both in Yiddish and in Hebrew. The Yiddish mama loshen ("mother tongue") spoken by millions rose to the rank of a European language.

Parallel to the traditional Jewish way of life, a secular Jewish culture developed and expanded--publishing houses, a flourishing Jewish press, a network of Jewish schools and Yiddish theater of a high standard. The Jewish street vibrated with new Jewish life. The voice of the Jewish writers was heard in public--Isaac Leib Peretz (1852-1915), Sholem Asch (1880-1957),Meir Weissberg (1856-1930), Joseph Opatoshu (1886-1954) and a whole constellation of Jewish writers and poets.

We always assumed that the Jews and Poles had a common language, that there was a traditional friendship between the two nations who lived under a common sky and breathed the same air. When, during various periods, Jew haters arose from amongst the Polish populace to persecute us and attempt to destroy us, as in the pogrom of 1664 in Lvov, we tried to belittle the event, to see it as a mere "episode." Surely not all Poles are villains, not all Poles are enemies of Israel? We were not unduly upset by people like Nowaczynski and Trzeciak. We always found consolation in the noble image of Eliza Orzeskowa (1841-1910, Polish novelist). However, dreaded times befell us--September 1, 1939!

As always in fateful times for Poland, hundreds and thousands of Jews joined the armed forces. Jews participated in the defense of Warsaw and could be seen everywhere--Jews from all social strata--workers,

merchants, intellectuals, men and women, young and old. All dug anti-aircraft trenches, "for our freedom and yours." Poland was prostrated by the atrocities of the Nazi conquest, the Jews of Poland were thrown into ghettos... The chimneys of the German crematoria rose to the heavens. Now the Jews of Poland experienced a crazed and macabre period of destruction and annihilation.

Day and night the devil's furnaces burned in Majdanek, Treblinka and Auschwitz. Long carloads of trains sped unceasingly from the ghettos to the death factories. The earth of Poland was covered with the ashes of Jewish life. The Nazi poison penetrated everything, tainting the mind and spirit. Alongside the exemplary instances of brotherhood and sacrifice on the part of a few noble Poles who helped Jewish victims there were the greater number of Poles who betrayed and informed and assisted the German hangmen in annihilating the Jews of Poland.

And during the heroic days of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, while the hell flames of the ghetto lit up the sky, the German-influenced Poles stood by, watching with mixed feelings of joy and sorrow--joy at the annihilation of the Jews, sorrow that the buildings which they had hoped to take over were being destroyed.

But villainy will not reign forever. The Day of Judgment must come. Even for the depraved German hangmen, the hour of reckoning arrived! Days of decline and shame befell the "Aryan race," while the day of victory came to the enslaved nations.

Many Jews served in the ranks of the Polish armed forces which

participated in crucial battles and thousands died in the march from Lenino to Berlin. This was the Jewish contribution to the final battles.

Six million martyrs were torn from amongst us by the Nazi nightmare; of these, three million two hundred thousand were Polish Jews. The most radiant Jewish community, the heart of the nation was destroyed. A glorious chapter in the history of Israel--the "Polish Period"--came to an end. Only the cemeteries remained in the hundreds of once vibrant Jewish communities, and even they were robbed and desecrated.

Immediately after the liberation, the Jewish survivors began returning to the cities of Poland. Jews emerged from bunkers, from the forests and partisan camps. They came from the East and the West, from the distant Russian plains and the camps in Germany--banished, orphaned and sorrowing--Jews who had been miraculously saved from the hangman. These childless people--so few in number--returned to the former ghettos, wandering amongst the ruins, as if hoping to find the shadows of the past...

However these broken and oppressed people could not even find a grave on which to shed a tear... Of all their loved ones there remained only ashes and even these had been scattered by the wind across the fields and soil of Poland. Where can a Jew visit ancestral graves? What should a Polish Jewish survivor have anticipated before returning to his native land?

Under normal circumstances, according to the principles of morality and logic, every Jew was entitled to hope for a warm and heartfelt reception from his Polish neighbors. For a thousand years the Jews had been

partners in the development of the country, partners in the struggle during times of crisis and now when the greatest of tragedies had befallen Polish Jewry, when of the three and one half a million but a few survived, every Jew might have expected a warm welcome. But what in fact happened?

Never in the history of enmity and hatred has there been a hatred such as we, the few hundred Jewish survivors, encountered among the Poles, who received us with hellish greetings. Certainly their behavior accords with no principles of logic or morality. But so it was and we must tell the truth to the whole world.

Large segments of the Polish people hated us. Some expressed their hatred in words, some in looks--in the street or trolleycars, others with a long knife, as in Kielce. Of course the majority of the Polish nation are honest and progressive people, Poles who believe in humanitarian ideals. It was from among them that the postwar Polish government was formed.

As for the methods, we saw that Hitler's Polish pupils did not lag far behind their master. This was proven at Kielce, where a Polish mob butchered seventy Jews with iron bars and wooden clubs, stones, knives and any available object. They split the bellies of pregnant women crushed the heads of infants falling not far short of Hoffmann, the sadist of Majdanek.

What good will it do us that the Polish murderers from Kielce were sentenced to death? Can that bring our martyrs back to life? And what is the purpose and value of our lives faced with such a beastly hatred? The

Polish government, good as it may be, cannot provide every Jew with an armed bodyguard. The vision of a country without Jews intoxicated the Poles.

These Poles knew no shame and at every opportunity they spoke openly. The Jews who, during the German occupation, lived as "Aryans" on the Aryan side also heard some Poles joyfully remark: "Say what you want about Hitler, he's done one good thing. He solved the Jewish problem in Poland. For this he deserves a memorial." Such is the face of the "Jewish problem" in Poland. The reaction of the Catholic establishment was typical of the prevailing mood in Poland. Catholic priests, preachers of Christian morality and brotherly love, remained silent on the subject of Jews. When Jewish blood was being spilled in the streets of Kielce they were nowhere to be seen or heard.

Their leader, the Catholic Cardinal August Hlond (1881-1948), said nothing to the masses despite being pressed to do so by the progressive Polish groups. What was the solution to this problem? The answer given by the Polish Jews was emigration! Witness the DPs in camps in Germany, Austria and Italy, who organized themselves after 1945. On all roads and across every border, the remnants of Polish Jewry moved--a memorial to the millions, a memorial to so colorful a Jewry. Childless, sad, broken and depressed the Jews were driven from the land to which they had been closely tied for so many generations. Of their possessions--houses, businesses--all that remained was knapsacks.

The Jews who embarked on a wanderer's journey departed from Polish soil, leaving behind their cemeteries, the scattered ashes of their dear ones,

their martyrs. May they serve as a reminder which might perhaps on occasion deprive your eyes of sleep.

Rabbi David Kahana

Zahala

January 1992

THE POGROM OF 1664 IN LVOV

The Jews of Lvov refer to the year 1664 as "The year of murder and madness" because of the unprecedented scope and cruelty of the attack, which even Polish historians were unable to gloss over. The perpetrators were Jesuits. The names of the murdered listed in the memorbuch of the old synagogues, engraved on the gravestones of the martyrs in the old cemetery and recorded in the court files are evidence that no historian can deny.

Already in 1663 there was a worrisome increase in the scope of malicious attacks by the Jesuit novices who lived near the Jewish district in the suburbs. Window breaking, foul language and cursing caused frequent brawls. Finally the Jews decided to put an end to this situation and take action. Many of the Polish ruling class, concerned with the well being of the Jews who lived in the suburbs, agreed to allow the Jews to arm and defend themselves. Thus the Jews purchased bayonets, spears and rifles, trained in their use and then placed guards near the synagogue.

These actions naturally increased the anger of the Jesuit students. In the spring of 1664 there was a dreadful outburst. On May 3 the Catholics celebrated the finding of the cross and the Greek Orthodox Church the feast of St. George. The Jesuits announced they were organizing large processions and the Ruthenians (Ukranians) wished to greet the new archbishop Zaliborski on the same day. On May 4 a great stream of people began coming from the surrounding area, including many trouble makers. The Jews were very worried, knowing that the following day was fraught

with great danger. The Starosta, to whom they turned with a request for protection, sent a small force from the palace to the Jewish suburb.

Despite the Sabbath, some 400 heavily armed young Jews gathered near the synagogue. They divided their force into three companies: one, led by Leizer, took up its position near the royal flour mill; the second led by Kuczka, near the slaughter house; and the third led by Torczyn in the square between the synagogue and the Jewish homes.

The morning was relatively quiet, but in the afternoon the craftsmen, servants of the nobles and masses of people began streaming from the city. As the sight of armed Jews aroused their ire, they shouted abuse and hurled stones. The Jews responded and began successfuly repelling the attackers. Then the Jesuit novices intervened. Shouting and inciting, they attacked the Jews.

Even the antisemitic historian Jozefowicz could not but admit that the Jews acquitted themselves heroically. It is quite possible that they could have once again repelled the attackers had it not been for the treacherous behavior of the palace soldiers who, instead of defending the Jews, joined the attackers. The mob broke into Jewish homes, stole, despoiled and murdered without hindrance. They took no pity on the aged or the infants, men or women, scholars and notables--all died as tortured martyrs. The novices vented their wild lustful vengeance by bursting into the synagogue, cruelly desecrating it, ripping the Torah scrolls and destroying everything in sight. The <u>hazzan</u> Shmuel ben Yosef Hayyut, who stood engrossed in prayer, was stabbed to death, his blood splattering the ark which he faced.

When word of the slaughter reached the city a feeble attempt was made to arrange a peaceful settlement. Representatives of the city council who were despatched to the suburb were beaten and wounded by the frenzied mob. Retreating, they were followed by the surviving Jews fleeing for safety. The council then ordered the gates of the city to be closed, thus preventing further destruction by the mob. More than one hundred innocent Jews were killed on this tragic Sabbath and no doubt on the following day the Jesuit priest gave an impassioned sermon about the duty of loving one's neighbor!

However, this was not yet the climax of the "mad year"--the suffering of Lvov's Jews had not reached an end. Most of the surviving Jews from the suburbs abandoned their homes and sought refuge in the city from the constant harassment of the Jesuit novices. Even Rabbi David Ben Samuel Ha-Levi (Taz; 1586-1667) the author of Turei Zahav, who lost both his gifted sons, fled to the city. Even in the city there was a suffocating atmosphere because the Jesuit novices continued to mock and threaten the Jews. The looted Jewish property was estimated at more than 200,000 gulden, a fact which upset those who had not received a share of the loot. The city council, aware of the mob's ugly and threatening mood, undertook to provide the money for hiring armed men to protect the Jews. And in fact 100 soldiers were conscripted--sixty paid for by the council and forty by the Jews--but the past bitter experience prompted the Jews to appeal for help to the nobleman Stanislaw Potocki, the crown army commander who immediately despatched two squads of cavalry under the command of Tarnowski. They were ordered not to billet with the Jews but rather with the Christians in the city and suburb. They also obeyed

Potocki's instruction to "fully exploit the hospitality of their hosts." Though this compulsory billetting was intended as a punishment, it provided the Jesuit novices with a further pretext for incitement against the Jews, who were now the cause of this aggression.

As the feast day of June 12 approached there were signs of burning hatred portending disaster. The council, composed of well-meaning people such as Matias Koczenkowicz, a doctor of law, Johann Stefan Delrife and the intellectual Baldini did everything in their power to prevent the impending tragedy but found little understanding among the guilds and citizens' societies. On the eve of the feast, the heads of the suburban districts and the guilds were summoned to the municipality building and ordered to prevent public disturbances. They were asked to compel the guildsmen to carry their arms during the procession on the following day, to be responsible for their employees and to obey the orders of the authorities regarding rioters. Judging by the cool, apathetic reaction of the citizenry to these exhortations, it was not difficult to deduce that they could not be relied upon. The mayor, Bartalomeus Simirowicz, the well known historian of Lvov personally hastened to the Jesuit monastery, pleading with the monks to use their influence with the novices to prevent acts of violence. He was given a promise that no one intended to keep. The novices did not hold the June 12 services in their chapel but rather in that of the Dominicans and the city council ordered the caretakers and their assistants to station themselves in the Jewish quarter to assure their safety. However, their attitude to this assignment can be judged by the fact that several of them refused to obey the loathsome order, preferring punishment and dismissal to protecting the Jews.

This then was the council's blunder--having seen the caretakers' mood they should have placed the defense of the Jewish quarter in the hands of the commander of the royal cavalry. History does not relate whether a placatory sermon was delivered at the Dominican chapel, but the fact is that immediately after the service the novices, artisans and rabble burst into the Jewish quarter and began looting and killing. In an honest attempt to contain the mob the mayor ordered the closing of the gates, but in doing so he also blocked access to the Jewish quarter for the cavalry company stationed in the city.

Drums called the citizens to arm. At the same time, delegations were despatched to the Catholic Archbishop Jan Tarnowski and to the heads of the Jesuit order requesting that they exert their spiritual influence to restrain the riotous youth. The mayor and several members of the council visited the site of the pogrom. The rioting might have subsided after the first wave of killing and plundering had Tarnowski and his cavalry arrived on the scene. As soon as he learned what had happened in the city he insisted that the gates be opened so that he might enter the suburbs with his soldiers. However this also enabled the Christian residents of the suburbs, who had already had a taste of killing and robbing Jews, to enter the city.

Now a quarrel broke out between Tarnowski and the city council and instead of joining forces to disperse the rioters the armed citizens disbanded, leaving the bloodthirsty mob to attack the wretched Jews. Though Tarnowski struck forcefully at the mob, even firing at them with the city's cannon, he could not control the murderous plundering rabble.

A few of the armed citizens responded to the mayor's plea, remaining to deal with the mob, but only towards nightfall did the rioting cease. By then all the Jewish houses were destroyed, the synagogues desecrated and ravaged, the precious silver ceremonial objects stolen and above all seventy-five additional martyrs including leaders and officers of the community, rabbis and writers added to the list of the dead. Some of the badly wounded died a few days later. The dates of these events--eighth of Iyyar (May 3) until 20 Sivan (June 18) 1664--were recorded in Jewish sources as a period of murder and plunder.

On the Thursday night three novices, sons of noble families, tried to molest homeless Jews wandering in the streets. However here the civil guard intervened, firing shots which killed a citizen named Stuntel who had tried to defend the Jews. The novices were apprehended and turned over to the municipal court. A few Christians including the priest Simanowicz, were also killed during the riots. Here one must extol the behaviour of a number of Christian families in both the city and suburbs --who gave asylum to Jews fleeing from their bloodthirsty pursuers, thus saving their lives.

All told, more than two hundred Jews died in this pogrom. The financial loss in cash and goods totalled more than 700,000 gulden, excluding the damage and losses to Jewish homes and property.

However this despicable injustice did not remain without response or retribution. All over the kingdom not just Jews but many other responsible people reacted against the mass murder and plundering of peaceful and industrious citizens. High-ranking members of the church and

the civil government were in agreement in denouncing the villainy. This time they did not limit themselves to expressions of sympathy but took concrete steps to assist in compensating the Jews for the damage. The chivalrous spirit of the Polish nobles was repelled by this vile attack. It is important to note that a cardinal was one of the first to lodge a very strong censure against the council and the citizenry. This fact contradicts the sarcastic remark of the historian Simirowicz who wrote that only bribery motivated the nobles in defending the Jews. Threatening letters were sent to the council by Nikolas Prazimowski the cardinal of Lutsk, Jan Udinet Zamojski, Stanislaw Potocki the crown army commander and other important people, who wrote that shame should cover the faces of those who allowed such violence to take place against loyal subjects of the king, whose rights and privileges, like those of all other citizens of the city, are recorded and guaranteed. Lvov had besmirched its good name the world over and even the cardinals in Rome were shocked to hear of these abominations. Nothing remained but to compensate the Jews for their losses and if this were not done soon they would take steps which would cause great damage to the city. However, they did not content themselves with threats. One of the noblemen, the guartermaster general Samuel Leszczynski the Starosta_of Lutsk on his own initiative undertook to punish the city. The historian Simorwicz describes this as a new attack against the Jews but in fact it was against the city.

On July 21, 1664 Leszczynski's men appeared before the gates of Lvov. They broke the chains and destroyed the gates and began plundering the city. This time the city council, acting wisely and courageously, speedily mobilized the civil defence forces to repell the attackers. Capturing several noblemen, the council punished them according to the

Treaty of Torun. However in doing so they aroused the ire of the upper classes against them. On August 4 the chief prosecutor of the law courts in Lublin, Stanislaw Biniawski despatched a threatening letter to the council protesting against their attempt to dishonor and humiliate the nobles and demanding the immediate release of the captured noblemen. Seeing that the council was not expediting the release, Biniawski initiated legal proceedings against Lvov, sentencing all the council members to confiscation of their property and in addition some to be humiliated, some to death and others to permanent exile.

Meanwhile the Jews did not sit by idly but brought the matter before the king, who had already on June 30 appointed a committee of inquiry. The king annulled the severe judgement of the Lublin court on the grounds that the matter belonged to the king's jurisdiction or at least to that of the district assembly. The committee of inquiry was officially confirmed in a decree of August 13. Although the royal decree specified that the Lvov council should participate in the investigation, as the accused party they were denied involvement. Replying to the accusation of not taking the necessary action to repell the attackers and protect the Jews the Lvov city council claimed that the Jesuit students who started the riots, and not they, should be brought to trial. The council further claimed that despite the fact that the first attack did not take place within the municipal boundary, they had done everything possible to quell the riots. Furthermore, Tarnowski and his soldiers were there to protect the Jews and the council was not to blame if he not only failed to do so but also dismissed the armed citizenry who could have helped in the defense. Christians were also killed, including an Armenian priest, some in battle with the Jews and others by the municipal canon. An additional

argument was that among the instigators and mob leaders there where also nobles such as Monastyrski, Mikolicki, Grajowski, Chwalowicz, Dylewicz, Szczerzynski and others whom the council apprehended but who were released by the Dominicans. The committee thoroughly interrogated all the witnesses, including all those presented by the Jews. Upon completing the inquiry the committee submitted a report, including the testimonies, to the royal supreme court. The committee was composed of two nobles, two senators, two priests and the king's secretary, thus giving the lie to the claims by the historian Simorowicz that the Jews bribed them. The judgment against the city council can be explained by the nobility's displeasure, particularly that of Samuel Leszczynski.

The judgment was pronounced on July 24, 1686 which was relatively expeditious for that period. The verdict displayed the Polish high court's sense of justice. It was severe and only in a certain sense not entirely just since it did not punish the inciters who were really the most guilty.

Here are the details of the verdict:

1. The city council must pay a per capita indemnity to the families of the murdered Jews, according to the Slavic custom and, for the wounded, compensation for their pain according to custom.
2. The fine due for killing or wounding Jews according to the decree of Boleslas the Pious (of Kalish, Great Poland) to be paid to the royal treasury.
3. Four mayors, four council members and four members of the "Committee of Forty," to be chosen by the Jews, to be imprisoned for one year and six weeks.

4. The Jews are to submit an estimate of damage to the synagogue, homes silver utensils and cash and also the legal expenses. They must support this by a statement under oath before a royal municipal court and should receive payment within two weeks, on pain of additional fine.
5. In future the Jews will remain undisturbed, the owners of their present homes, synagogues as well as those properites which require rehabilitation. They will retain their rights for the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages and their commercial rights to open slaughter houses, warehouses and shops. Finally their right to rent apartments in Christian houses will be retained and protected like all their other entitled rights.

The damage report which was submitted under oath to the special court, the files of which still exist, enables us to get a clear and detailed picture of the riots and other relevant events which are historically and culturally important. We learn the names of the wardens of the two communities, the names and social rank of the injured parties, the extent of damage, synagogue appurtenances and occupations in which Jew were engaged. The Jews swore an oath in the name of the Torah and the special court affirmed their oath during the same year.

The files do not record whether the judgment was ever put into effect. In fact, the Jews saw to it that most of the judgment remained on paper in order to avoid irrevocable hatred. They could not forget the generosity of the Lvov city council during the Chmielnicki catastrophe and therefore agreed to accept whatever compensation the council proposed. It was understood that the council would drop its demand for 20,000 gulden which it paid to Chmielnicki as ransom for the Jews. Both the council and the

Jews understood that it was better to reach an agreement between themselves rather than line the pockets of judges and lawyers by extended court action.

During this era both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities underwent painful and trying experiences but the city council did not learn any lessons from their experience with fanaticism. Under Jesuit influence the council issued a decree which adversely affected commerce in Lvov. Scottish merchants had been resident in Lvov for many generations, enriching the commerce of the city and even having a street named for them. In 1668 the council forbade the public practise of Protestant ritual, thus forcing a large number of the very diligent Scottish minority to leave and depriving the city of the substantial income they generated as well as of some of their western culture.

The Ruthenians also suffered from unjust oppression by the council, although they themselves contributed considerably by a bloody internecine struggle between two archbishops over ecclesiastical supremacy. John II Casimir Vasa (1648-68), King of Poland as well as archbishop of Gniezno was a decent kind hearted and sympathetic ruler towards the Jews. He abdicated in favor of Michael Wisniowiecki, (1669-73) on the day of whose coronation the district parliament reaffirmed the rights of all Jews in the kingdom. Among the groups, who lobbied for this reaffirmation, such as the council and elders of certain communities, we first encounter the name of Moses Markowicz, general legal advisor for the Jews and representative of the parnassim of the Jewish communities.(1)

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THE RIGHTS OF JEWS IN GALICIA DURING THE AUSTRIAN REGIME

Austrian hegemony over the province of Galicia dates from the partition and annexation of Poland in 1772. The Austrian government did not alter the existing laws or customs of these territories and the Polish language continued to be the national language of the province.

Galician Jews stood aloof from the Poles as they had done under the Polish regime. Ninety percent of the Jewish population were bearded haredim (ultra Orthodox) with side-locks. Among them were many admorim (abbreviation: adonenu, morenu, ve-rabbenu "Our lord, master and teacher--title of hasidic rabbi) and hasidim. They were organized in their own communities led by renowned rabbis.

The Poles were fundamentally Jew-haters and categorically demanded the expulsion of the Jews. The Austrian government sided with the Poles, promulgating Judenordnung ("Jew Statutes") one of which, from 1778, forbade the employment of Jews by Christian manufacturers and merchants. Jews could work only for Jewish employers. Many other discriminatory antisemitic laws were enacted.

In 1780, upon the ascent of Joseph II as Holy Roman Emperor succeeding Maria Theresa the Austrian government revoked the anti-Jewish discriminatory laws, granting the Jews the rights and privileges enjoyed by Poles. In 1787 a law was approved which allowed Jewish

doctors to treat Christian patients, something they had previously been forbidden to do. At the same time, Christians were allowed to employ Jewish laborers. The law also made Jews liable for military service and abolished the regulation which forbade burial within a few hours of death, as was customary among the hasidim and haredim in Poland.

In the province of Galicia, the prime minister and judges at all levels, the police and the municipal civil servants were all Polish. Ignoring the now benevolent Austrian laws relating to the Jews, these officials continued to discriminate against them.

From 1792 until 1848, while Austria was ruled by Francis II (1792-1835) and Ferdinand I (1835-1848), the Poles strongly opposed the liberal attitude of the regime towards the Jews of Galicia. New laws were promulgated which were antisemitic, one of which established that a Jew could not be a candidate for a municipal post unless approved by the local Christian leaders. Other laws restricted Jewish migration from city to city and emigration from Poland to Galicia. A Jew who was not a resident of Galicia could visit for only a limited period. Taxation on Jews was much higher than on Poles. The Jews had to pay three grader a for pound of meat purchased from the Jewish butcher and five grader for every fowl. They also had to pay a candle tax on all candles used for Jewish ritual, including wedding and memorial candles. In 1812 a law was passed forbidding Jews to trade in alcoholic beverages or to solicit contributions for the poor in Erez Israel.

Even the principle of "equality" which was part of the new Austrian constitution of 1848 was not implemented. After the ascent of Francis Joseph to the throne of the Austrian empire in 1848, Jewish representatives were elected to the Austrian parliament: Rabbi Dov Berush Meisels (1798-1870) of Cracow, Abraham Halpern of Stanislawow, the Viennese preacher Isaac Noah Mannheimer (1793-1865) from the city of Brody. During this period the Reichsrat refrained from repealing the anti-Jewish laws and in 1853 Jews were forbidden to purchase land.

Even in Lvov, the provincial capital, antisemitism was rampant. Jewish merchants who established businesses in the city were forced to close them, while the government fined landlords who rented premises to Jews. The Jewish merchants appealed against these laws, but the provincial government rejected their appeal.

In 1859 the municipal authority in Tarnow demanded that the government revive the law of 1785 promulgated by the Polish king regarding the ghettoization of the Jews--separating them from the Christian population. At the same time, the prevelant phenomenon of employing female Christian servants in Jewish homes was forbidden by law as was the prohibition of employing Christians in the village inns owned by Jews. In 1859 a Jewish merchant in Wodowice was fined for employing a female Christian maid. On many occasions the police arrested female Christian maids who worked in Jewish homes. The law was rescinded in 1860.

As was mentioned above, the Polish officials in the provinces disregarded the Austrian constitution and even in the provincial

capital most of the laws advantageous to the Jews were ignored. In 1863, when the Lvov city council drew up its constitution establishing a 15 percent quota for Jewish representation, the Poles ignored the regulation, finding ways to prevent political equality between themselves and the Jews. The 1867 constitution permitted Jews to become members of the city council. Jews were also able to be candidates for the provincial council and the parliament, but the local Poles did everything in their power to discriminate against them. In 1883 the education law stated that the prinicipal of a school must be of the same religion as the majority of pupils, but the Poles in parliament lobbied to prevent this regulation from being implemented in Galicia.

The Austrian law for the freedom of the citizen, which was intended to protect the Jews, existed only in theory. This was demonstrated when a Jewish girl was abducted to a monastery. Her father raised a commotion; the law obliged the captors to release her, but the judges and officials dared not confront the monastery.

The Austrian government was well aware of the Polish discrimination against the Jews in contravention of the law but did nothing to rectify the situation. Nothing was done to punish the law breakers or to force the Poles to obey the law and improve the status of the disadvantaged Jews.

Even the Jewish population failed to act in order to translate the desire to aid them into action. At the beginning of the 18th century most of the Galician Jews belonged to the ultra-orthodox constituency,

spending days and nights studying Torah and worshipping--Galicia being a center for Torah and hasidic learning. In the 16th century the famous sage, Rabbi Moses Isserles (Rema; 1525 or 1530-1572) lived and worked in Cracow. He wrote glosses on Rabbi Joseh Caro's Shulhan Arukh (Code of Jewish Law). Many large and famous yeshivot ("academies"; institutes of talmudic learning) were active in Lvov at the beginning of the 18th century. Yeshivot and hadarim ("rooms", old fashioned Jewish elementary schools) proliferated in the cities and towns of Galicia and the haredim obstinately refused to send their children to the municipal schools even though they were contravening the law. This resistance continued for many years, with Jews submitting petitions and appealing to the emperor to rescind the law. After a prolonged struggle, the haredim won out and were given the option of not sending the children to the municipal schools.

This was a period of growth for Hasidism in Galicia--the dynasties of Ropczyce (a town in Western Galicia in the Rzeszow province), Belz (a town in the Lvov province of Eastern Galicia),and other branches scattered throughout the small villages.

Among the admorim who left no male heirs were Elimelech of Lyzhansk (1717-1787), Jacob Isaac Ha-Hozeh mi-Lublin ("the Seer of Lublin," 1745-1815) who was initially active in Lancut but then moved to Lublin because of his disagreement with Elimelech of Lyzhansk, Isaac Leibele of Tuchin (Tuczyn), Elazar Weissblum of Rzeszow (1838-1910) and others who had thousands of followers crowding their courts.

Mendelssohn's Enlightenment also penetrated Galicia and the Haskalah

flowered there. Among the Haskalah pioneers were Nachman Krochmal (Renak; 1785-1840), Joseph Perl (1773-1839) and Isaac Erter (1791-1851). Other preachers of enlightment included: Joshua Heschel Schorr (1818-1895), Hillel Kahana (1821-1901), Naphtali Keller (1834-1865), Joseph Zadok, Solomon Rubin (1823-1910) and many more who helped spread the Enlightenment amongst the Jews of Galicia.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM IN POLISH LITERATURE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

For both the state and its people, the 19th century was one of the most difficult periods in Polish history. After the partitions of 1772 and 1793 and the shocks of the 1830 and 1863 insurrections, Poland began a thorough soul searching in an attempt to heal its sickness--first during the four-year Sejm of 1794-1798 and later during the entire 19th century.

The best of her citizens, philosophers, statesmen, and politicians sought ways of repairing the country's faulty social economic and cultural structure. As this stock-taking compelled them to confront the situation of the Jews in Poland, they suddenly discovered a hermetically sealed community. Some saw the Jews as an alien people, while liberals viewed them as an ancient, well-rooted ethnic group--not Poles, different but not alien and certainly neither a foreign body nor a pernicious destroyer of the Polish nation. These liberals believed that the Jews could be converted to good Poles.

The representative of the first group was the Catholic priest Stanislaw Staszyc, a chronic antisemite whose rationale was based on the vulgarization of the theory of evolution. As a fanatical Catholic he could not reconcile himself to the idea that the Jews, "killers of Christ," should be treated humanely and granted full civil rights. A large number of 19th century Polish leaders, poets and politicians felt like Stanislaw Staszyc. His venomous and influential articles in the Gazeta Wiejska newspaper had titles such as "The Reasons for the Harm Caused by the Jews" (Warsaw June 26, 1818).

The other group of people--men like Kolontaj, Mateusz Butrymowicz (1745-1814), Tadeusz Czacki (1765-1813), Joachim Lelewel (1786-1861), Jacek Jezierski, Lukasinski and Eugeniusz Surowicki--adopted a more moderate attitude. They felt that the Jews of Poland should be granted equal rights on condition that they change their way of life, abandon the Yiddish language, speak Polish, shed their special Jewish garments, cut their beards and side locks, close down the yeshivot and hadarim and send their children to the Polish schools, forsake the Talmud (which some even advocated burning), institute religious reform, forbid child marriage, annul the autonomous Jewish community, close down the Jewish printing presses, prohibit the import of Yiddish or Hebrew books, translate the holy books into Polish and use only the translations. Some Poles were more lenient in their demands, while the even more stringent insisted that the Jews be expelled from Poland.

At the beginning of the 19th century there was already a small stratum of assimilated Jews. Influenced by the Enlightenment from Berlin they accepted almost all the conditions and instructions of the Polish statesmen. They aspired to total assimilation into Polish culture and eradication of the national identity of Polish Jews--converting them to Poles of Mosaic faith. However, the majority of the Jewish population were far removed from these polemics, being totally immersed in the world of Hasidism which was at the height of its flowering. These Jewish masses were prepared to completely forgo the emmancipation which threatened to destroy the entire Jewish community in Poland.

It is not my intention to examine in greater detail the positions and opinions of the Polish statesmen and politicians regarding the Jewish problem in Poland but rather those of the writers, poets and philosophers. The spiritual world we find in their writings is different. They also preach integration and assimilation but their approach is generally more humane and cordial. The majority of works with which I will deal express a positive attitude towards the Jews and their problems, though in about twenty-five percent of them the attitude is disdainful or wickedly hateful.

I must point out and even emphasize an important element which is common to all the aforementioned attitudes. Polish literature of the 19th century is rich in Jewish characters and types and even includes descriptions of the Jewish life style. However all the writers approached the Jewish problem from an emotive Polish point of view. Which of the Polish writers bothered to study the problems of the Jews? In order to do so the writer would at least have to know Yiddish; or to understand the "harmful" influence of the Talmud, all the treasures of Jewish literature, customs,the hadarim and yeshivot--the writer would even have to know some Hebrew. Which Polish writer spoke Yiddish or Hebrew? Klemens Jonosza, the only one who could speak Yiddish, even translated Mendele Mokher Seforim into Polish. None of the abovemetioned writers knew anything about the real problems of the Jews, the truth of their life style, their spiritual world, the richness, depth and beauty of hasidic life. How ironic that although Jews and Poles had lived together for a thousand years, the Poles still knew nothing about the Jews. Only the Polish nationalist public and its stand on all aspects of the conflict found expression in 19th

century Polish literature. Descriptions of the Jewish life-style occasionally appear in 19th century Polish literature because they were part of the Polish landscape, a segment of the rich and variegated life of the Polish village, city or town. However, independent Jewish life as an end in itself, the aspirations, experiences, give and take within the community, the permutations, the conflicts over political views during the second half of the 19th century--all these were of no interest to Polish writers.

They paid no attention to the awesome Talmudic literature and Hebrew publications which nurtured Jewish communities worldwide, the hand crafted ritual objects, synagogue architecture, the modern synagogues which enchanted non-Jewish travelers. These writers, beginning with Nimcewicz,("Leib and Sarah") through Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910) and continuing till the last of them in the 19th century including the famous combative propagandist Polish Jewish writer, Hilary Nussbaum (1820-1895) who advocated the complete assimilation of the Jewish community in Poland--almost all dealt with only one side of the problem i.e. the progress of the literary protagonist in the process of assimilation. Nussbaum's book Leon i Laib, Studium rel-spoleczne' deals with one major problem: what can be done to convince Laib to become Leon.

Another phenomenon can be discerned in the second half of the 19th century. A considerable number of young Jews who had extricated themselves from the narrow framework of the ghetto appeared in the public arena, having discarded their traditional Jewish garb and acquired a secular higher education and European manners. Many tried

to force their way into Polish society, denying their Jewishness and identifying themselves as Polish: "I am a Pole of the Mosaic faith." A few severed the last bond which linked them with the Jewish people by converting and seeking salvation in the Christian church. These apostates, deserters, are the flotsam carried by the waves of the Enlightenment movement. They believed that the Jewish people, having already fulfilled its historic mission and therefore lacking a raison d'etre in the modern period, must disappear by assimilating with the Polish nation. Disappointed and despondent, they writhed on the Polish soil as if expelled from the longed for Garden of Eden. Such phenomena, opinions and ambitions were undoubtedly entwined with very deeply felt emotional experiences and hard struggles which most certainly overwhelmed and depressed Jews at the time.

None of these events are mentioned or dealt with in Polish literature of the 19th century--the sensations and dilemmas of Jews on the verge of the final and bitter decision to sever themselves from their Jewish way of life and move into the Polish camp, or those on the brink of a more extreme choice--conversion. The Polish writers laud, support and encourage the assimilation process, contending that this is the real Jewish question--good for the Jews and good for Poland which will obtain a reinforcement of Jewish intellectual strength. Between the lines one senses a silent missionary approval of the conversion movement which reached epidemic proportions during the second half of the 19th century. The assimilated Jews of Congress Poland, Galicia and the rural provinces provided effective assistance to the assimilation process. It is worth noting the names of some of these assimilated Jews: Ivan Stanislavovich Bliockh (Bloch; 1836-1901), Leon

Hollaenderski, Ludwig Joshua Lubliner, Leopold Kronenberg (1812-1878), Wawelberg, Natanzon, Rotwand, Matthias Bersohn (1823-1908), Hilary Nussbaum (1820-1895), Lewental, Iger, Stansilaw Posner, and Wilhelm Feldman (1868-1919), the author and critic who converted on his death bed. Some of the above were close friends of Eliza Orzeszkowa. Some were baptised and severed all ties with Jews, though it would be more accurate to say that they thought they had severed the ties to their Jewish origins. Others did not convert but saw themselves as Poles affiliated to the Mosaic religion. Their mouthpiece was the Jewish weekly in Polish Israelita, which was published in Warsaw between 1866 and 1906. The name itself reveals the intention of the assimilationists: the Israelite is not a Jew in the national-ethnic sense but rather a person with a Jewish religious identity. The paper employed intelligent people and its purpose was to influence the Jewish masses to assimilate. It waged a bitter war against the Orthodox, the hasidic dynasties and the Jewish nationalist ideal. It preached religious reform along the lines of Berlin, published a series of articles on Judaism and fought antisemitism which had spread considerably amongst the Polish population since 1863. The newspaper did not reach the Jewish masses who were at that period far from the idea of assimilation.

During the second half of the 19th century a new factor emerged on the public scene in Poland: the first blossoms of the Zionist ideology--the Hibbat Zion movement which was more prevalent in Russia and Poland than in Western Europe. The idea was an ancient one because the Jews never abandoned their desire for a national home, language and culture. The national idea was reinforced by the strong antisemitic

atmosphere which had spread among the Polish masses and found expression in the Polish press. Even the best of Polish writers opposed this Jewish national movement. For example Eliza Orzeszkowa, who all agreed was warm and positive in her attitude to the Jewish problem and who was even attacked by the Polish nationalist writers for her philosemitism, was nevertheless utterly convinced by the ideology of total assimilation of the Jewish masses, seeing the Jewish problem from the Polish-national point of view. She expressed her opposition to Zionizm thus:

"There is no question that the Jews are entitled to aspire to an amelioration in their lives, but settling them in Erez Israel for many reasons seems to me a dream which has no chance of realization and is likely to bring in its wake bitter consequences. More than any other factor which has operated until now this dream will plunge them into isolation from the surrounding population, totally separating their hearts from one another, intensifying mutual ill will and bringing failure to both sides. The Zionist leaders have a heavy responsiblity to speedily ascertain whether they are not leading their people to new depths of hardship rather than to freedom and redemption."
(E. Orzeszkowa, Listy Zebrane, Tom 1, Warszawa 1964, Str 241. List Do_ Ppznera 24.11.1903)

In a letter to Stanislaw Posner dated October 4, 1903 she wrote: "I am opposed to Zionism, not as an ideal which as such perhaps has a right to exist but rather as an ideal which has no chance of realization and might rather cause terrible results." If a writer of Eliza Orzeszkowa's stature reacts so coldly and negatively to Zionism what

can one expect from the rest of Polish writers?

After the revolt of 1863 one discerns a tendency towards conversion amongst a number of Jewish circles in Poland. While this was not a movement, in the 18th and 19th centuries several thousand Jewish families were baptised--most of them during the second half of the 19th century. Apostasy had been a recognized phenomenon amongst the Jewish community in all generations, every period having its own reasons and circumstances. In Poland, during the period under discussion, the Jewish community was not particularly affected. Those who converted were the rich, educated and enthusiastic supporters of the Enlightenment who in any case aspired to complete assimilation in their private lives. Therefore one can say that apostasy in Poland during the second half of the 19th century was the logical conclusion, the final stage of an assimilationist inclination and frame of mind. Incidentally, this is what happened in Germany after Moses Mendelssohn.

We can learn something about the apostates in Poland from a book by Teodor Jeske-Choinski (Neofici Polscy, Warsaw 1904) which is tendentious, pseudo-scientific and has a hostile antisemitic tone. Despite these faults it is still a historical document which reflects the situation and attitudes of the period. The appearance of the book caused great alarm among the children and grandchildren of the apostates who had tried to conceal or eradicate the traces of their Jewish ancestry. They bought up most of the book's first edition and it was rumored that they paid the author a substantial sum to refrain from printing a second edition. Today this book is a rarity and of

antiquarian value.

The process of assimilation which began in the 18th century and peaked at the end of the 19th century was not received favorably by the Polish population. Antisemitic publicists and a number of writers began speaking of the Judaization (Zazydzenie) of Polish literature and journalism. Too many apostates, false-Poles, were infiltrating Polish society--becoming types and subjects in Polish literature. The outstanding Polish writer who dealt with the subject of Jewish apostasy during the transitionary period between the 19th and 20th century was R. Gawalewicz. In his book Mechesi ("The Apostates") he faithfully depicts the life-style of the rich Jewish bourgeoisie of Warsaw. These former Jews take great pains to emulate the life-style of the Polish aristocracy (the Szlachta), their extravagance, arrogance, pride and pretentiousness. Their dream is to make money and marry into an impoverished aristocratic or pseudo-aristocratic family, thus acquiring an aristocratic pedigree. The world described in the book is a far cry from the real Jewish environment in Warsaw. It is a world of Jewish apostates, fleeing from their Jewish surroundings, attempting to cover the traces of their ancestry.

This was the result of an assimilation process of Polish Jewry beginning with various programs for the solution of the Jewish problem in the four-year Sejm and ending with a large group of Jewish apostates at the end of the 19th century. It was amid this spiritual environment of hatred and humiliation that Polish Jewry welcomed the 20th century--the most tragic in the thousand year history of the Jews in Poland.

THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST IN EASTERN GALICIA

Since it is still difficult to present a complete picture of the Holocaust in Galicia. I will briefly outline the major statistics, describe the ideology of the German anti-Jewish policy and the mechanism of extermination.

The term "the Jewish Settlement in Eastern Galicia" refers to the Jewish population living in the southern part of Poland, between the former Polish-Soviet border and the San river, i.e. the districts of Ternopol and Stanislawov and Lvov in the eastern part. From September 17, 1939, this whole area was under Soviet domination and was captured by the Germans on June 22, 1941. From August 1, 1941 the area became a single administrative unit called the "District of Galicia", attached to the German government. At the outbreak of World War II (September 1, 1939) about 573,000 Jews lived in this area. The number rapidly increased with the stream of refugees from Western Galicia who fled eastward to escape the German terror. It is difficult to estimate their total number but in a place like Krakow five to six thousand Jews fled. Immediately after the first wave of refugees came a second even larger one.

In the fall of 1939 (according to German sources) about 300,000 Jews fled from the German occupied zone to the Soviet administered one. I estimate that of this number between 120 to 150 thousand went to Eastern Galicia so that at the time the Germans conquered the area about 700,000 Jews were living there. A large number (about 30

percent) resided in the cities. The large communities were Lvov (160 to 170,000), Stanislawow (25-30,000), Przemysl (20-24,000), Kolomyia (15-18,000), Ternopol (15,000), Drohobycz (15,000), Boryslaw (15,000), Stry (12,000) and many other larger communities such as Brody, Chortkov and Zloczow.

The Nazis' sword of extermination fell on these 700,000 Jews. At that time there was a great change in the Nazi policy toward the Jews. Up to the outbreak of the German-Soviet war the German extermination policy toward the Jews had not reached its peak. They persecuted the Jews in every possible way, organized pogroms upon entering each conquered town, restricted their civil rights and denied them the protection of the state. They forcibly shore the beards of Jews, burned their synagogues, starved robbed and tortured them, imposed collective fines, expropriated property, imprisoned them in ghettos, conducted a policy of physical pogroms and economic impoverishment and did everything possible to break their spirit. The Jews who were physically fit for labor were reduced to the status of slaves, being forced to work under inhuman conditions in labor camps where they died of hunger and cold.

This oppression did not yet lead to total extermination because the Germans still did not dare to take such a decision. However, through the above mentioned persecution they managed to murder about half a million Jews out of a total of three million in the German zone. The outbreak of the German-Soviet war brought an end to the period of "micro-terror" and "cool pogroms." It was replaced by what the Germans called "the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem" (Endlosung der

Judenfrage), a euphemism for the total extermination of the Jewish people. In an official document addressed to his superiors, Dr. Franz Walter Stahlecker, the commander of Einsatzgruppe A, maintained that pogroms alone would not solve the Jewish problem but that they must be slaughtered in a more systematic manner (From the Nuremberg Trial--American documents No. 180).

Instead of the pogroms which were supposed to permit a venting of the deep anti-Jewish feelings of the populace, a new more horrible form was introduced--the Aktion. No longer a spontaneous act of hatred capable of destroying scores or hundreds of victims but rather an action planned in cold blood and executed with all the resources of military tactics and strategy. This program was probalbly approved at the beginning of 1941 when the preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union had begun. A hint of what was planned for the Jews can be found in a speech by Hitler on January 30, 1939 in which he threatened the Jews: "During the time of my struggle for power it was in the first instance the Jewish race which received my prophecies with laughter when I said that I would one day take over the leadership of the state and with it that of the whole nation and that I would then among many other things settle the Jewish problem."

The decision to exterminate the Jews was not taken at a meeting of the Reichskabinet but at a party for Hitler's close Nazi friends. The reasons given for the extermination plan were that the Jews, and particularly those of Eastern Europe, were Bolshevists, Communist "germs" who could be successfully combatted only by extermination. The powerful apparatus of Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda and

Public Information undertook the task of disseminating this notion amongst the German people. Incitement against the Jews was intensified in all the media--press, radio and cinema. Slogans like "We want to liberate Europe from the Jewish-communist poison" or "Our goal is a Europe free of Jews" were disseminated in the newspapers. Goebbels himself published a series of anti-Jewish articles in which he promised the Jews "a merciless trial and extermination". (In particular, two speeches which were published as editorials in Das Reich from July 20, 1941 and November 16, 1941).

This laid the foundations for the forthcoming Aktionen, the planning and implementation of which were executed by the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office; RSHA) in a special branch of Amt IV (department) designated as Section IV B 4 responsible for evacuation of Jews, headed by Adolf Eichmann. Several weeks before the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler called a meeting of his generals and senior Wehrmacht officers to discuss the function of the Einsatzgruppen and their coordination with the Wehrmacht. Composed of four units, with personnel drawn from the SS (Schutzstaffel; protection squad) and the SD (Sicherheitsdienst; security service), the function of the Einsatzgruppen was to serve as a task force of mobile killing units operating in German-occupied territories. Their broad instructions were to "combat hostile elements" and execute comintern officials, communist party officials, Jews in the party and state apparatus, and other extremist elements. As far as possible they were to operate independently, receiving assistance from the Wehrmacht and police where necessary. This criminal plan was implemented with the invasion of the Soviet Union.

In Eastern Galicia the Germans perpetrated horrible acts upon entering the cities and towns. During the first days of German occupation (beginning in July 1941) several thousand Jews were tortured and murdered in Lvov where they were assembled in the city's prisons under the pretext of having to collect the bodies of dead prisoners. The same ploy was used to murder Jews in other cities in Eastern Galicia. In Kamionska-Strumiowa (Kamenka-Bugskaya), Drohobycz, Boryslaw and other cities. Ukrainian peasants participated in pogroms, killing and wounding Jews with scythes and shovels and plundering their possessions. The Ukrainian Hilfspolizei (Ukrainian Auxiliary Police) established by the Germans assisted in the Aktionen in almost all the cities. In Lvov one of the Aktionen had the characteristics of a Ukrainian-national pogrom: Petliura Days (July 25 through 27, 1941). The first days of the occupation of Ternopol saw horrendous bloodshed. It was here that the poet Alter Kacyzna among others, was tortured to death. Especially horrifying Aktionen were perpetrated in several cities (Zloczow and Chortkov) by the Totenkopfverbande (SS Death's-Head Units). The situation in the southeastern part of Galicia was relatively calm because it was first occupied by the Hungarian Army. Shortly after that the German army took over and the bloody Aktionen began immediately (for example the murder of 3,400 Jews from Kolomyia in a grove near the village of Sheparovtse or 8,080 Jews in the cemetery of Stanislawow). Here as well the Ukrainian Waculy (Ukrainian mountain dwellers) participated in the pogroms in a number of cities.

A special chapter could be devoted to the Aktionen against Polish and German Jews who, until the war, resided in Hungary. Now they were transported from their homes to the Stanislawow-Kolomyia area where

the Germans drowned most of them in the Dniester river.

Alongside the physical extermination of the Jews the Germans employed a series of spiritual, economic and legal forms of persecution. Almost every community was forced to pay exorbitant collective fines. In Lvov, for example, the first fine (July-August 1941) was for twenty million rubles, silver objects and jewelry. During the first weeks of the conquest Jews were ordered to wear identifying armbands with a Magen David. They were rounded up and taken to forced labor camps which were established in the Lvov area--Sokolniki, Vinniki, Janowska; in the Zloczow and Przemysl areas--Kurowice, Kozaki Lacki and elsewhere. It is estimated that in Eastern Galicia there were about eighty camps. In many cities the Jews were imprisoned in ghettos. But all the methods of persecution which were instituted during the first months of occupation failed to achieve the German goal of total extermination. During the winter of 1941-1942 the Aktionen were intensified, particularly against selected groups of people: Jewish hostages, members of left-wing Jewish youth movements and Jewish intelligentsia. Fritz Katzmann (1906-1957), the SS Police leader of the Galicia region, frequently particiapted personally in the Aktionen, reserving for himself the "honored shot" for the famous members of the intelligentsia. During these months Aktionen were also carried out against the aged, children and "asocial elements." In March 1942 there was a series of large Aktionen which the Germans camouflaged with the term Aussiedlung ("evacuation"), to create the illusion that the Jews were being sent for resettlement. The Germans took sadistic pleasure in fixing the dates of the large Aktionen during the periods of Jewish holy days. During the first wave of large

Aktionen, launched in Lvov on March 19, 1942 and continuing until April 9, the Eve of Passover, 15,000 Jews were sent to the Belzec extermination camp. It was at this period that the Germans began to perfect their killing apparatus by establishing special extermination camps, among them Belzec, which began operating on March 17, 1942, using gas chambers for killing the victims.

The Germans had additional "partners" in their bloody campaign--starvation, cold and disease took a terrible toll of the Jewish population. Orphaned families whose breadwinners were killed in the Aktionen or in the labor camps and orphans evicted from their homes were the prime victims of these powerful "partners."

During the summer, when the cold ended the Germans allowed the Jews no respite, launching a new wave of Aktionen. However all these summer Aktionen were overshadowed by the longest and most horrible Aktion against the Jews of Poland--the one in distant Warsaw, which began on July 22, 1942, the eve of Tishah be-Av, and continued until September 12. At the same time Aktionen were launched in Eastern Galicia: Ternopol (June 11, 1942), Lvov (June 24), Drohobycz (July 27), Zloczow, Boryslaw and elsewhere. On August 10, 1942 the longest Aktion in Eastern Galicia was launched in Lvov, lasting until August 23, during which time fifty thousand Jews were sent to Belzec. The period of the Jewish holy days was "decorated" by the Germans with a wave of new Aktionen. From Rosh Ha-Shanah to Sukkot there were Aktionen in Zydaczow, Stanislawow (Rosh Ha-Shanah) Kolomyia, Brody (Yamim Norai'm) Sokal, Brzezany (Yom Kippur), Borszezow, Kopyczynce, Skala, Zbaraz, Mielnica, Jezierna and elsewhere.

During this period, when most of the Jews of Eastern Galicia had been exterminated, Friedrich Wilhelm Kruger, (1894-1945) the Higher SS and Police Leader in the Generalgouvernement published two cynical decrees. According to the regulations of October 20, 1942 and November 10 he gave orders to establish 54 ghettos in the Generalguovernement area, of which 31 were to be in Eastern Galicia. In fact at that time no Jews remained in most of the 31 cities enumerated in the decree. In a report to Kruger on June 30, Fritz Katzmann states that on November 10, 1942 there were 254,989 people in the District of Galicia (Documents from the Nuremberg Trial--Document No. 18 of the American Delegation). After the murderous Aktionen of 1942 came a new stage: search and kill. Units of SS, soldiers and Ukrainian auxiliaries surrounding the ghetto would hunt for adults, children, the aged, ill and unemployed, killing them on the spot. Sometimes the victims were brought to camps where a selection was made (selektion). The few who seemed sufficiently healthy and strong were sent to labor camps, while the rest were assigned to "scrap" (i.e. death). Thus all the ghettos were systematically searched until the only Jews left were Arbeitsjuden (category A, "work Jews"), Rustungsjuden (category B, Jews working on munitions) and Wehrmachtjuden (category W, Jews working for the Wehrmacht). Finally the remaining Jews in the ghetto were exterminated and the area declared Judenrein ("cleansed of Jews").

By June 27, 1943 Aktionen Judenrein had been carried out in all the cities and towns of Eastern Galicia. The final Aktion for the liquidation of the Lvov ghetto began on June 1, 1943 and was

completed on June 2, with some ten thousand Jews meeting their deaths. On June 30, 1943, after the liquidation Aktionen in Galicia, only 21, 156 Jews remained in the entire district and these were imprisoned in twenty labor and extermination camps (according to Fritz Katzmann's report). However Katzmann assured his commander General Wilhelm Kruger that "the number of Jews remaining alive decreases day by day." Katzmann did not take into account those Jews who hid on the Aryan side, joined the various partisan groups or sought refuge in the forests and mountains. The Germans eventually captured most of those Jews "who were living illegally." After the war it emerged that a negligible percentage of the Jewish population of Eastern Galicia had managed to flee. More than two thousand survivors registered with the Jewish Committee in Lvov, a few hundred in Boryslaw and in Drohobycz, more than two hundred in Stanislawow, a few hundred in Tluste--the only place where Jews were still alive after the liberation--small groups of Jews in Ternopol, Brody and other cities. Thus the destruction of the Jewish community in Eastern Galicia was almost total. Only a tiny fraction of the thriving community of the past remained--one per city and two per family.

THE KIELCE POGROM

When I look at the notes I made in 1946 more than a year after the end of World War II--I am shocked and can hardly believe my eyes: Did all this really happen? It was only a year after the defeat of Nazi Germany. We thought that the land was peaceful and the She'erit Ha-Peletah could return to their homes without fear, to recover and live in tranquility after years of torture and wandering.

Suddenly a new blow fell on us--robbery, murder and extermination. Daily we received information at the Va'ad ha-Kehillot ("Committee of Jewish Communities") building on 6 Twarda Street in Warsaw about horrible deeds of murder and attacks on Jewish individuals and families in the towns and villages--Jews who dared to return to their homes and demand the restitution of their property from their Polish neighbors or those who wished to return and take up residence in the town where they had lived before the war.

A large section of the Polish nation, particularly the extreme right wing, former members of the Endecja (Endeks--the National Democracy) party and other reactionary movements and often the Catholic masses--all hating the regime--decided to direct their wrath at She'erit Ha-Peletah and complete Hitler's work. They justified their loathsome and depraved behaviour by saying that the Jews occupied a large number of senior positions in the new regime. In their literature they accused the handful of Jewish survivors of introducing and supporting Communism in Poland.

From May 1945 until the end of 1946 an underground network was established for the purpose of assassinating Communist party members, officers and officials working for the new regime. Their secret order specifically emphasised the obligation to shoot any Jew they encountered. Most of the murders of Jews were committed by the two fascist organizations, NSZ -Narodowe Sily Zbrojne (National Armed Forces) and WIN--Wolnosc i Niepodleglosc (Liberty and Independence).

No place in Poland was safe for Jews. The murderers would abduct Jews from trains, cars, buses and sometimes from their homes, drag them to the woods and kill them. In March 1946 a car left Lodz with five young members of Hapoel Ha-Mizrachi on their way to Krakow. In the forest near Piotrkow Poles dragged them from the car and shot them. Their names were: Zipporah Strowinski, Abraham Persel, Samuel Richbard, Yehiel Friedman and one whose name I cannot remember. According to my notes, based on a reliable source in the Ministry of Defense in Warsaw, 351 Jews were murdered by fascist killers in 1945 and more than 400 in 1946. In the second half of 1946 the murderers started using the old and tried method of the blood libel in their pamphlets. On Passover eve, 1946 all over Poland--in the cities, towns and villages--warning notices appeared "Guard your child! More and more children are disappearing." This was a vile insinuation that missing Christian children had been kidnapped by Jews to use the children's blood for the baking of mazzot. From all parts of the country came frantic rumors of missing Polish children who had been kidnapped by the Jews for their blood. The billboard posters described in great detail how a rabbi from the local synagogue was caught dressed in a blood soaked kitel (a white liturgical garment) and hanging near him

was a dead stabbed female child. The child's name was even mentioned: Bronislawa Mandan.

The situation deteriorated to such an extent that the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot decided to send a delegation to the head of the Catholic church, primate Cardinal August Hlond (1881-1948), to apprise him of the situation whereby Jewish survivors were being murdered by Polish citizens and of the dangers inherent in the dissemination of the blood libel myth. The Va'ad asked him to issue a pastoral letter to Polish Catholics denouncing the cruel murders and condemming the blood libels.

In mid May 1946 the secretary general of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot, Michael Zilberberg traveled to the cardinal's residence in Poznan to arrange for an official meeting with the Va'ad's delegation. Though the cardinal received him courteously, he avoided setting a meeting on grounds of old age and illness. The tone of his conversation with Zilberberg was unctuous and reassuring; he even expressed a fondness for the Jewish people, but he did not issue a pastoral letter. Zilberberg erred in engaging in a dialogue with the cardinal, since the sole purpose of his visit was to arrange for a meeting between the head of the Catholic Church in Poland and a delegation from the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot. Therefore, I feel it is my duty to publish for the first time the full transcript of their meeting:

HIS EMINENCE AUGUST CARDINAL HLOND AND THE JEWISH TRAGEDY

Some days ago His Eminence Cardinal Hlond received the representative of the Jewish religious unions, citizen professor Michael Zilberberg, who was staying in Poznan, for a lengthy conversation. The cardinal expressed an interest in what had befallen the Jews who were rescued and the conversation went far beyond the usual format of an official meeting. It was clear that the tragedy of the Jewish people was deeply felt by the head of the Catholic Church in Poland.

"It would seem to me that all the immortal truths are contained in the Old Testament," the Cardinal began. "The Ten Commandments, the inspiring words of the prophets must have disturbed the tranquility of that true devil, Hitler. With the arrogance of an anti-Christ he assumed that if he murdered all the Jews, the eternal foundation of an existing culture would disappear and the pagan National Socialist ethos would physically and spiritually prevail in the entire world. He was not likely to succeed in this endeavor and despite the fact that the Jewish people suffered such heavy losses they were not shattered."

"On behalf of the [Jewish] religious organization I would like to use the good offices of His Eminence to thank all those people who helped save us from the crematoria. I refer particularly to the organization of nuns who did so much to save the children."

"I am very pleased to hear this. This should have been the behaviour of all people for whom the essence of our church is more than meaningless words. During the period when I was in France even I tried to get Aryan papers for the Jews of Poland, particularly the yellow certificates which would have enabled them to emigrate to America."

"Perhaps His Eminence could explain to me why Hitler especially chose Poland as the site for the murder of the European Jewry?"

"I have often pondered over this question and perhaps the best answer I could find was in Rauschning's book [Hermann Rauschning, Gesprache mit Hitler, 1939, Published in English as Hitler Speaks, London 1939] in which the author describes his conversations with Hitler before the latter came to power. In one of the conversations Hitler contends that only the introduction of slavery can guarantee the enhancement of a country's power. He gave as examples some of the ancient states and even the success of a few contemporary empires. In this conversation Rauschning learned that Hitler intended to turn Poland into a state of slaves in which ten million people would live and work for the glory of Germany. The rest would have to die. The extermination of the Jews was the prelude to Hitler's plans."

"Does his Eminence know about the instances of attacks upon Jews after the liberation of Poland?"

"Such occurrences sadden me greatly. Even without again invoking the Christian reasons--in present day Poland there are no objective factors for the dissemination of antisemitism. It is the real madness of those who continue in the underground and those who sit in the government. I denounce their behaviour as a Catholic and a Pole."

"And what is your Eminence's opinion on the problem of Erez Israel?"

"The revival of the independence of a Jewish state is a matter of supreme importance. After years of catastrophies and tragedies the Jewish people will be resurrected in all their glory. I do not know what is the absorptive capacity of Palestine--it would seem that it could now absorb up to one million Jews--that would be wonderful. I wholeheartedly wish you success in all your endeavors. Regarding the holy places I am certain we will reach an agreement. I am happy that you visited me. Please convey words of encouragement to your brothers and sisters. My heart is with you in your great tragedy and in your days of joy. Remember, in moments of tragedy only the power of belief can save one from catastrophe and annihilation."

The consequences of the atrocious propaganda were not late in coming. Cardinal Hlond managed to divert the vigilance of the Jews in Poland and calm their fears but he exerted no influence on the Catholic population of Kielce.

On the morning of Thursday the fifth of Tammuz 5706 (July 4, 946) an eight year old boy Henryk Blaszczak and his father walked through the streets of Kielce. The father told passersby that the Jews had kidnapped the child, held him captive in a basement in number 7 Planty Street and tortured him for two days in order to kill him for his blood. The child related how he was miraculously saved from the clutches of the murderers. Within a few hours the story had spread like wildfire throughout the city. At ten in the morning several hundred people gathered around the building on 7 Planty Street and by the afternoon there were thousands. At that time about 250 Jews resided in Kielce, including some Holocaust survivors and others who

had returned from the Soviet Union. Most of them lived in 7 Planty Street, which was the headquarters of the Kehillah and the Kibbutz Ihud.

The ringleaders mingled with the crowd inciting them to attack the house and kill the Jews. They shouted slogans like: "Death to the Jews! Death to the killers of our children! We'll finish Hitler's job!" The Jews shut themselves in the building. Locking the doors and shutters they prepared to defend themselves with the few weapons in their possession. At noon a group of armed policemen led by sergeant Wladyslaw Blachut was sent to disperse the mob and defuse the tension. Blachut called upon the Jews to open the gates and allow him and his assistants to enter. The besieged Jews gave a sigh of relief. Here was their salvation; Blachut and his men would save them from the furious mob. However to their shock and great disappointment he ordered them to hand over their weapons and go down to the courtyard.

It emerged from the subsequent investigation that Blachut was the only policeman sent by the authorities, while his "assistants" were murderers from the mob. Balchut disarmed the Jews and left them defenseless to face the mob. When the Jews refused to descend to the courtyard Balchut began hitting them on their heads with his rifle butt and shouting: "The Germans didn't manage to finish you off but we'll complete the job." Thus Blachut signaled to the mob who stormed the house, smashed doors, shutters and windows, entered the building and began beating, killing and destroying everyone and anything they encountered. They used their fists and wielded clubs, stones and iron bars which had been prepared in advance and brought to the site by the organizers of the pogrom.

At the same time some of the mob rampaged through the city dragging Jews from their homes and killing them on the spot. Another mob stormed the railway station, where they split into groups and searched all the incoming trains. People who looked like Jews were dragged from the carriages and brutally murdered.

Only towards evening did the security forces from Lodz arrive in the city to quell the riots and restore order. That evening about 80 people were arrested. The following day, Friday morning, the Defense Minister Radkiewicz together with the public prosecutor Dab arrived in Kielce. The minister called a number of consultations and gave orders to immediately convene a special military court to try the accused for murder. On the very same day, Zagorski, the chief of police of Kielce, the commander of the security forces in the Kielce district Major Stawczynski and the commander of Kielce district, Kuzminski were arrested. They all bore responsibility for the bloody events.

On Saturday evening, I and a few other members of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot flew to Kielce to see for ourselves what was happening and hear the survivors' testimony. Here are some of their stories:

Moshe Zaltzman, a young poet, was traveling to Lodz on the bloody Thursday to deliver a manuscript to the Yiddish Writers Association in Lodz. The murderers dragged him out of the train carriage, one of them beating him on the head and body with a block of coal. He was replaced by another person who continued the assult until Zaltzman fell unconcious.

The murderers were not content with just killing but wanted to torture their victims as well. Joseph Feingold pleaded with the mob "Shoot me! I cant bear the suffering," but they replied "No, we won't shoot you. Suffer, you cursed Jew!"

It was a mania of torture, the bloody dance of murder--almost mystic, a religious worship of killing. A Jew from Krakow, Kramer, was beaten on the head with iron bars while elegantly dressed women urged on the killers with excited shouts of "Hit him again!"

Dorfman, formerly a barber from Otwock, had his nose slowly broken and then his teeth and jaws. Melech Gleit from Chmielnik was beaten with boards. Two Jews from Wlodawa, Abraham Katiewicz and Abraham Goldstein, were beaten with stones ripped out of the pavement. Other Jews were stabbed in the stomach with bayonets; hands, feet and heads were smashed. Two brave Jews Pinkott and Harendorf lunged at the attackers in order to save their wounded comrades. They were brutally murdered. Among the malevolent beaters of defenseless victims were young mothers such as Antonia Biskupska, a woman of twenty-six who had left her four-year-old child at home. She encouraged the killers and urged them to avenge the death of the Christian child whom the "Jews had tortured to death."

The Victims' Funeral

The funeral, held on Monday the ninth of Tammuz (July 8, 1946), was

attended by most of the city's populace. I looked at the faces of the people who were crowded on both sides of the street where the cortege was passing trying to ascertain what they were feeling and thinking. I cannot say that I saw any sorrow or regret. On the contrary, hidden smiles and cold stares accompanied me to the cemetery. On that afternoon the Kielce cemetery displayed its full dreadful ruin. Between the scattered remnants of gravestones and partially opened graves a large mass grave was dug into which forty-one coffins were lowered. Dr. Adolph Berman (1906-) gave the first eulogy on behalf of the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland. He was followed by minister Koczarowski on behalf of the Polish government and then professor Gureczko for the Anti-Racism League. The two Polish representatives expressed deep sorrow and anger and spoke of the disgrace that the Catholic citizens of Kielce had brought upon their people and nation. In his farewell on behalf of the Central Committee, Dr Berman said: "After what we have experienced, after what happened here--we have no words, we have no tears, we can only say--cry out people of Israel! Shake your fist at the forces of darkness who seek to strangle us!"

The burial completed, Cantor Moshe Koussevitzky chanted the burial prayer and the El Male Rahamim. The terrible tragedy of destroyed Polish Jewry found expression in his pure melody. The mourners recited Kaddish and I delivered the final eulogy on behalf of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot and the Council of Rabbis in Poland. I referred to the heifer whose neck is broken in Deuteronomy 21 and accused the Catholic clergy and the Polish intelligentsia of these murders:

"What did you do to warn against the horrible consequences of the dreadful demon called blood libel? The Polish clergy and a large number of the intelligentsia cannot say `Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done'" (Deuteronomy 21:7).

Here are the names of the victims:

1. Eisenberg
2. Yisrael Bruch
3. Pela Gutwerzel
4. Bilah Gotstotes
5. Bilah Gertner
6. Flora Dotchke (child)
7. Leizer Harendorf
8. Wozedler
9. Weinberg
10. Abraham Weintraub
11. Weinrab
12. Nathan Tennenbaum
13. Dr. Soveron Kahana
14. Mendel Moravicz
15. Mendel Mikolavski
16. Samburski
17. Yehiel Sokolovski
18. Albirt
19. Shalom Plotana
20. Esther Prashovska
21. Yitzchak Preis
22. Feinkuchen

23. Regina Fish
24. Adam Fish (child)
25. Berl Friedman
26. Kost
27. Samuel Kuraf
28. Herschel Kash
29. Samuel Keresh
30. Robindorf
31. Reisman
32. Z. Shulamnovitz
33. Fania Shumacher

Thirty-three bodies of men, women and children were identified by witnesses, by relatives or by their documents or clothing. Eight badly mutilated, unidentifiable bodies were buried anonymously. One such body bore on its arm the tatooed Auschwitz number 2969B. Six of the wounded died in the Kielce hospital a week after the funeral, bringing the total number of pogrom victims to forty-seven.

The Trial

On July 11, 1946 the first group of rioters were brought to trial before a special court. The weapons used by the accused were displayed on a table in the court--iron bars and pipes, axes, stones, poles, two handguns together with three sets of bloody clothes. I sat in the courtroom looking at the accused who sat with heads bent, not daring to gaze at the judges or the spectators. Here are some details about a

few of the accused who made a particular impression upon me.

Antonia Biskupska, about 26 years old, mother of a four-year-old child. On that sad Thursday she left her house and stationed herself in front of the mob shouting: "Death to the Jews, killers of our children!" She also threw stones into the building on 7 Planty Street. In a trembling voice she admitted that all this was true but explained that she was a weak and nervous woman; when she heard that the Jews had murdered a Christian child she could not control herself. Something compelled her to go out in the street and join the mob.

Jadwara Yurkowski was an educated man of forty and a member of the Kielce symphony orchestra. He led the mob as if he were conducting an orchestra shouting: "The men to the front. Death to the killers of our children!" Yurkowski tried to prove that he was dead drunk that day but the prosecution disproved this claim.

Julian Pokzewinski, aged forty-three--his blooded shirt was displayed on the table in the court as evidence of his complicity. He pounced on the stomach of a wounded women who was lying in a pool of blood. Pokzewinski did not even try to defend himself.

Dwrarz an eighteen-year-old blond boy used a stone to crack the skull of a Jew on Planty Street. He admitted his guilt, expressed remorse and requested leniency.

Then there was a group of four middle class men: the guard Stefan Mazur, the bakery owner Kazimierz Nowraski. the shoemaker Jozef Sliwa

and the shopkeeper Antoni Pruszkowski. On the day of the pogrom the four men abducted Regina Fish and her young son from their home. Taking them to the forest, they robbed her of 147 dollars and three gold rings and then clubbed them to death with iron bars.

On the same day (July 11) the special military tribunal pronounced eleven death sentences, life imprisonment and lengthy prison sentences.

Reactions of the Polish Press and Clergy

The entire Polish press, which at that time was still free, published editorials genuinely and categorically denouncing the hooligans and blaming the Polish reactionary circles, particularly the Catholic clergy, who might have prevented the pogrom but did nothing. All the political parties and newspapers adopted an apologetic tone: how could such a thing happen in liberated Poland? The exception was the representative of PSL - Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe ("The Polish Popular Front"). Stanislaw Mikolajczyk published a signed article on July 9 in his newspaper Gazeta Ludowa. In the article he said that although he was shocked by the pogrom in Kielce he felt the incident had not been thoroughly investigated and what mainly bothered him were its causes. One could judge and arrive at conclusions only after a thorough investigation of all the circumstances concerning the pogrom. The information available did not enable one to fully understand the underlying causes and subsequent development of the events. Such was the opinion of the Gazeta Ludowa. Scores of Jews were brutally

murdered by the Kielce mob but this was not sufficient for the Gazeta Ludowa journalist to understand that he was simply dealing with a bloody repulsive pogrom. Mikolajczyk and his ilk could not find it in their hearts to express a single word of protest, anger or condolence. One felt that between the lines they wanted to say "Perhaps the Jews were to blame."

The press statement by Cardinal Hlond of Poland, issued under pressure from the foreign press, was shameless and full of preconceived prejudices about the Jewish community in Poland. The following is his statement to the American press in Warsaw on July 11, 1946:

"1. The Catholic Church has always denounced murder wherever it occurred. It also denounced it in Poland--whether it was Poles or Jews who were murdered in Kielce or in any other part of the Polish republic.

2. The train of tragic and sorrowful events in Kielce proves that they cannot be attributed to racism. They grew out of different circumstances, painful and tragic. These events are a monstrous accident which fills one's heart with sadness and grief.

3. The Catholic clergy in Kielce did its duty. When they received word of the events the cathedral priest Roman Zlek ran to the site but when he arrived at Planty Street he was ordered away by the soldiers. When the army guards dispersed, five priests went to the site and saw that there were no longer any crowds but rather small groups of people. The priests advised them to go home. The following day (July 5) a

representative of the bishopric in consultation with the authorities and representatives of the municipality prepared a pacifying proclamation which was approved by Wojewoda, but the authorities did not publish it.

On July 6 the bishopric published its own proclamation which was read on the following day (Sunday, July 7) from the pulpits of all the Catholic churches in the city. Attached is a copy of this proclamation. Despite the terrible turmoil in Kielce the peace and quiet which prevailed this last week can be attributed first and foremost to the worthy and practical influence of the clergy.

4. Despite the fact that the Poles suffered and were killed during the German occupation, they nevertheless supported the Jews, hid and saved them, risking their own lives. More than one Jew in Poland owes his life to Poles and Polish priests. The fact that this good relationship has deteriorated is to a large extent the fault of the Jews who today occupy key government positions and wish to impose a type of regime which the overwhelming majority of the people reject. This is a harmful game which creates dangerous tensions. In these murderous armed clashes at the political front line, it is sad to say, some Jews are killed but so are many more Poles.

5. My personal attitude towards the Jews is known, even from my statements before the war. When I was in exile in France between 1940 and 1944 I saved many Jews, Poles, Germans and French from the death camps. I enabled them to travel to the United States, hid them in safe shelters, tried to get identity papers for them which saved their

lives. With all my heart I desired that in the world after the war the Jewish problem should finally find a suitable solution."

Though the cardinal requested that his statement and comments be published in the press without change or abbreviation, the newspapers did not comply. It is not true that the cardinal requested the press not to publish his statement.

When I compared the transcript of Cardinal Hlond's meeting with Michael Zilberberg, the Secretary General of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot, with his statement after the Kielce pogrom I was faced with an insoluable enigma. It is absolutely clear that Hlond had seen the warning notices "Guard your child! More and more children are disappearing." Hlond avoided relating to these notices. It is quite likely that he too believed that Jews use Christian blood for baking mazzot. But on the surface it was a courteous and sympathetic conversation about the Jewish tragedy in Poland. When asked about instances of attacks upon Jews after the liberation of Poland he replied "Such occurrences sadden me greatly...In present day Poland there are no objective factors for the dissemination of antisemitism. It is the real madness of those who continue in the underground and hide out in the forests. They think that they are determining policy and that by attacking Jews they are fighting the government. I denounce their behaviour as a Catholic and a Pole." However, in his statement of July 11 Hlond places the explicit responsibility for the riots in Kielce upon the Jews. How can one reconcile these two statements? Which is the truthful one? Which one reveals the real opinions and face of the cardinal?

The official Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano saw the need to comment on the Kielce incident. Reacting to the accusation by the Polish prime minister Osobka Murawski that the entire Polish clergy did not protest in one voice over the slaughter of the Jews in Kielce, the paper wrote: "The Catholic Church denounces acts such as murder. However, if one considers the matter logically the Polish Catholic Church is being asked to castigate something which has no relation to its functions, something which might--under the guise of doing justice to the murdered victims--unjustly affect other victims." In simple language the Vatican was saying--true, Jews were being murdered in the streets of Kielce but the Polish clergy is neither obliged nor should it interfere. L'Osservatore Romano's heart warmed towards the murderers of Kielce exactly as they felt pity for the Nazi's during the Holocaust. When Jewish blood flowed like water in the streets of Europe the Pope was silent.

During those sorrowful days only one Catholic clergyman, Kubina, the Bishop of Czestochowa, could be found in all Poland to raise his humane voice bravely against the anti-Jewish provocation in his city and against the pogrom in Kielce. All the other bishops in Poland, including one of the best known--the Archbishop of Krakow Sapieha, a scion of the upper class Polish nobility who was always called "the prince of the church, Sapieha." None of them saw the need to issue a pastoral letter to their flock during the Holocaust regarding the mass murder of the Jews in Poland.

For one thousand years we lived and worked as neighbors on Polish

soil. A thousand years--from the establishment of the Polish kingdom, perhaps as early as the first kings of the Piast dynasty (second half of the tenth century) we were already there, working and enriching the economy of the country. The only one who, in those days of death and destruction for the Jews, revealed a great, refined and humane heart was Andrei Sheptytsky, the metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Uniate Church. With his pastoral letter "Thou Shalt Not kill" he inscribed his name in the golden book of those days.

After the funeral I returned to Warsaw and wrote an open letter to the Catholic bishops and Polish intelligentsia regarding the events in Kielce. I gave the letter to Jacob Berman (1901-) and asked him to arrange that it be published in all the Polish newspapers. Berman, who was known as the eminence grise of the Polish government and who had direct contacts with Moscow, was far removed from Jews and Judaism but realized the importance of publishing this letter. Here is the text:

The Chief Chaplain for the Polish Army, Dr. David Kahana
Chairman of the Rabbinical Council for the Jews of Poland
Warsaw. July 5, 1946
An open letter to the bishops and intelligentsia of Poland

"Have we not all one father? Did not one God create us? Why do we break faith with one another, profaning the convenant of our fathers?" (Malachi 2:10)

From the darkness of distress, from the bonds of slavery, after an exhausting bloody war for all its citizens, the Polish Republic was

regenerated. The land saturated with blood of millions of innocent victims was rejuvenated in the spirit of the loftiest principles of justice and brotherly love. We all pray to God above that he should bless our land from the beginning of the year to its end.

From the olden days of Poland we, the sons of ancient Israel collaborated in all aspects of the country's life in order to enhance the economic well-being and prestige of the republic. When an enemy appeared and threatend the borders of our country we, the Jews of Poland, reported for duty in the ranks of the fighters, to defend with our bodies the land which bore and nurtured us. However, lamentably, during the occupation, when truth was throttled and hatred held sway, the venom of malevolence became deeply rooted in the hearts of many citizens.

We Jews of Poland bore the major brunt of the barbaric Nazis' lying propaganda. Poland was chosen by the enemy for the construction of its infamous industry of death where, along with people of other nations, millions of Jews were murdered. But the poison of hatred, nurtured during years of subjugation, struck deep roots in the society. There is an unabated increase in the murder of Jewish survivors. Ancient nonsense from the Middle Ages on the alleged ritual murder, the blood libel, raised from the junk yard of lies, is again being disseminated amongst the public, with lethal consequences.

The canons are silent, innocent blood has ceased to flow in streams fertilizing the fields of Europe and all the nations have risen to rebuild themselves in time of peace. Only hundreds of Jews of Poland

were one again sacrificed on the bloodthristy Moloch's altar called anthropological antisemitism in the name of baseless hatred--all this in liberated, independent, democratic Poland. In less than one year we witnessed three well organized pogroms (Rzeszow, Krakow and Kielce) all having the blood libel as their leitmotif. People who experienced all the circles of suffering during the occupation are now murdered in their homes as victims of perverse pogroms.

Sadly we have seen and even felt in the heart of resurrected Poland deeds which are familiar to us from the recent past--from the days of Hitler's horrendous regime. Kielce is but one stage of this criminal activity, while Rzeszow, Krakow, Radom and other cities and towns are the earlier links. How is it that the Christian clergy and Polish intelligentsia, who are well informed about the principles of our belief and with whom we have resided on this native land for one thousand years, were unable to explain to those confused people that all the accusations were unfounded nonsense? Innocent blood cries out to you, the shepherds of Christian flocks, to you the Polish intelligentsia; what did you do from the moment of independence to enlighten the masses?

Clergymen of the Polish people, in the name of the weighty sin of spilt innocent blood that cries out to the heavens for vengeance, in the name of the lofty principles of the Bible and the expressive words of Saul [Paul] of Tarsus "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." (I Corinthians 13:1)

We turn to you exalted and respected priests in passionate appeal. From your sanctuaries and the pulpits of your churches broadcast a pastoral letter to your millions of believers calling their attention to the injustice and sin of killing innocent people.

You, the Polish intelligentsia, the luminaries of science, the proud heirs of the great democratic thinkers in Poland has the time not come for your clear voices to be heard from the temples of science?

Poles and Slavs--famous for your hospitality--people who opened their gates to the exiled and persecuted from the world over--reawaken. Remember that these horrible deeds loudly echo beyond the borders of the state and besmirch the good name of Poland and the Poles. I turn to you in view of this new tragedy so that your weighty and honored words might crack the hearts of some and you will join the mutual and coordinated efforts of all the citizens of our country for the welfare of the general public and the happiness of every individual."

The letter was in fact published in the entire Polish press and a reply was not long in coming. On July 10, 1946 I received a letter which was addressed to Adolf Berman, the President of the Central Committee of Polish Jews in reply to his eulogy at the funeral in Kielce and to me in reply to my open letter.

"July 10, 1946
To citizen and member of Parliament Berman,
Representative of the Central Committee of Polish Jews in Warsaw
To citizen David Kahana

Chief Rabbi

Warsaw

Gentlemen: I wish to speak to you about the Jews of Poland, seriously, quietly and to the point. I am a Pole but not an antisemite, a democrat with progressive opinions, but not a Communist. I am writing this letter after receiving the contents of citizen MP's words at the funeral of the Jewish victims in Kielce and the open letter to the Polish public by the citizen the Rabbi.

It would be worthwhile for you, gentlemen, and other Jews who are today influential in Poland, to study the contents of my letter, particularly for the self interest of the Jews.

You Jews are good merchants but bad politicians and pyschologists. You were exterminated by the Nazis and the Poles frequently hid and helped you despite their own tragedy. And how do you thank them? What are the facts regarding the Jewish problem? Suddenly the Jews reached the top, occupying the important positions in the state and setting the tone for life in Poland.

The press has been taken over, radio, cinema, industry, the ministries and so on--Jews everywhere, and in high proportion, and most important, in top influential positions.

I have the impression that amongst the Polish people (including the workers) there has never been so great a hatred of the Jews as there is today. The Jews are of course to blame because you are seen as the

chief disseminators of Russian communism in Poland. Have you done the right thing by this behaviour?

Which people in the world would pay no heed to such a situation? Do you think that the Poles will withdraw and suffer your hegemony in Poland? You fool yourselves by reading articles and statements in newspapers which are all of the same character, articles written mainly by Jews whose vision of reality is colored by their desires. Don't fool yourselves into thinking that because of the Polish names you've adopted you will succeed in retaining your unnaturally high status in Poland unless the country becomes the 17th Soviet Republic. And if this were to happen you would be to blame!

We are well acquainted with the situation and know that between 1917 and 1918 the Jews were the major factor in the Communist revolution in Russia. The Poles don't want this bliss, this Garden of Eden, hence the great antagonism between us and the Jews. Try holding a secret and honest referendum amongst the Polish workers asking whether they want bolshevism in Poland and you will discover that the overwhelming majority oppose that system.

Even the PPR [Polska Partia Robotnicza - Polish Workers' Party] does not call itself the Communist party, knowing that it would further increase their unpopularity amongst the workers. I do not belong to any party and am not a "reactionary" but I have my wits about me when I observe your activities in Poland. You've gambled on communism despite your proclaiming pretty words about democracy, patriotism and other such things. Consider whether you Jews are perhaps indirectly to

blame for the Jewish blood shed in Kielce. You don't know how to live together with the Polish people, to maintain a sense of proportion, and you're unable to understand the psyche of the Poles. You are aping Hitler. You want to be Herrenvolk in Poland with the Poles as your "slaves." Remember that Hitler lost even though he believed in his success.

Remember that the Polish people have untapped reservoirs of patriotism at all levels of society. An example of this was the battles against the conquerors, particularly the Warsaw [Polish] Uprising.

(signed)
A Pole"

Copies of this letter were received by a number of Poles and Jews. All the antisemites speak with one tongue. With the same formula they try to prove that the Jews were responsible for the Kielce pogrom. Too many Jews occupy key positions in the Polish government. The Jews want to impose the Communist regime on the Polish people and the latter are resisting. And how do the Polish people defend themselves against Jewish communism? It goes without saying, with a pogrom in Kielce. The Jews are an ungrateful people. The Poles saved them,--hid them during the German occupation, and they thank the Poles by imposing a foreign Communist regime upon them.

We heard the same words years later from Nikita Khrushchev, "Too many Jews, too many Rabinowitzes in Poland." In 1962 the leaders of the Communist government in Poland said the same thing. This time it

involved an almost total expulsion of Jews from Poland. All the Jews who had labored to build a new Poland after the war were forced to emigrate.

But let us return to Kielce. Among the attackers of the defenseless Kielce victims were young mothers with delicate hands and motherly hearts. There were musicians, people who read the works of the Polish humanist writers--Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Slowacki, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Stefan Zyromski, Stanislaw Rejmond. The rioters desecrated the memory of these noble minded people. They were intoxicated by the sweet taste of spilled Jewish blood which even blunted their sense of fear of the punishment they were likely to receive. What is the source of this never-ending hatred? Were the Jews of Kielce economic competitors for their Polish neighbors? No. The Jews lived in a collective. They didn't engage in commerce or manage any workshops but were merely preparing for their emigration to Erez Israel. Perhaps the two hundred Jews of Kielce were a political power, a political danger for Poland. Are these the Jews who occupy key positions in the Polish government?

The accusation that "Jews occupy all the key positions" was greatly exaggerated and we Jews of Poland knew that. We know the names and number of Jews who held senior government positions. According to our reliable sources between eight to ten percent of senior positions in the administration and industry were held by Jews, many of whom were ideologically far from communism but rather good Zionists waiting for the first opportunity to emigrate to Erez Israel.

From where did this hatred stem? The Kielce pogrom was the largest and

bloodiest after those of Krakow, Radom and Rzeszow, with the greatest number of victims since Hitler's defeat. In attempting to analyze what happened behind the scenes we have to consider two factors. The first is the political. It is absolutely clear that the pogrom was not a spontaneous outburst by an unorganized mob. On the contrary, it was carefully prepared and staged. As I mentioned previously--pamphlets suddenly appeared all over the country describing the disappearance of Polish children--a hint for blood libels. Then the Christian child, who supposedly escaped from a Jewish cellar and was miraculously saved from the hands of the Jews, was well rehearsed for his role. Consider the thugs dressed in police uniforms who tricked the Jews into handing over their licensed weapons. Thus it emerges with certainty that the entire event was planned and orchestrated by the gang of thugs affiliated to the reactionary nationalist antisemitic underground military organization NSZ - Narodwe Sily Zbrojne (National Armed Forces) and perhaps by the Polish Government in Exile in London which used all means to create chaos in Poland, hoping thus to topple the left-wing government.

However, there was a second factor. It is a sad truth that the Polish masses have a blind, almost biological, hatred for the Jew. Unfortunately, this is the bitter truth and thus a large city in the heart of Europe, after six years of Hitler's regime, in the modern atomic age, through a blood libel can turn in an instant into the site of a medieval witch hunt, a blood hunt after innocent, orphaned and defenseless people.

DESTROYED SYNAGOGUES

To the Jewish viewer, the post-war ruins of Poland's desecrated and burned synagogues presents a horrible and shocking picture. Some were burned to the ground, in others the exteriors remain whole while their ravaged interiors, doorless and windowless, serve as garbage heaps. Only hospitals, garages and workshops were left standing. The Nazis used many of the synagogue buildings as stables.

To this day we do not know what vast cultural treasures and original works of Jewish art were lost. We lost buildings of great artistic architectual value--synagogues built in the shape of a fortress or in the Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque or late Renaissance style. We also lost masses of ceremonial objects whose artistic value cannot be estimated: curtains for the ark of the law, Torah mantels embroidered with pure gold thread, Hanukkah lamps, spice boxes, candelabra, kiddush and havadalah cups, Torah crowns, salvers, Torah pointers, charity boxes, artistic Purim scroll cases in gold and silver, smaller ceremonial objects such as wall decorations with the inscription "When Adar comes in, gladness in increased" (Ta'an. 29a). There were also many Torah scrolls written on ancient parchment and centuries-old books of great historical value.

Outstanding amongst the destroyed synagogues were the unique wooden ones. No other European community built as large a number of wooden synagogues--this being a specifically Polish-Jewish phenomenon dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and perhaps even earlier. Since the Jewish communities were not wealthy, they built their synagogues of

wood rather than stone, frequently incorporating exceptionally clever architectural solutions. Realizing the artistic and historical value of the buildings, the Nazis burned them all down during the first days of their occupation.

I was tormented by the thought that these synagogues would be forgotten, their historic and artistic structures obliterated together with the Jews themseves. I knew that the scholars of Polish art history were also dealing with Jewish art, synagogue architecture and particularly the wooden synagogues. Shimon Zeichik, who specialized in this field, had been murdered by the Nazis in 1942. I turned to the Architecture Department at the Warsaw Polytechnic where I learned that in 1946 they had begun to collect documents, photographs and oral accounts of all aspects of Jewish art, with a special emphasis on the synagogues, while two important Polish institutions also deal with the subject. During the summer of 1949, before I emigrated from Poland, they sent me an interesting map recording all the sites in Poland which previously had wooden synagogues. Now we shall at least know where these synagogues were located and be able to see photographs of them so that they will not be obliterated from our memory.

A circular letter about the reorganization of the religious life of the Jews in Poland (February 10, 1945, paragraph 8) stated that the "Starosta was obliged to return (rewindykacja) all the synagogue buildings within the boundaries of its jurisdiction to the new Jewish community." Every head of community was to receive the synagouge from the authorites, repair it and then make it available for the congregants. The reality was somewhat different. A large percentage of

the remaining synagogues were in the possession of strangers and never returned to the Jewish communities. The Va'ad Ha-Kehillot protested and turned to the courts. Some communities won their case and received the synagogue but most were never returned, simply because there were no Jews to request them.

I shall mention just a few instances of litigation in Polish courts regarding the repossession of syangogue buildings. The complete accounts can be found in the archives of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot in Warsaw, 6 Twarda Street.

Two interesting cases occurred in Krakow. The synagogue "Reb Eisik Reb Jekeles shul," called Boznica Ajzyka in Polish, was built and financed by a rich Jewish merchant and banker who served as head of the community, Isaac ben Jacob Jekeles (d. 1653) in the Kazimierz suburb of Krakow, where the Jews who were forbidden to live in the city were allowed to reside. Having good connections with the royal court, Reb Eisik obtained permission (a privilege dated April 30, 1638) from king Ladislas IV (1632-1648) to build the synagogue, which was designed in Renaissance style. The local priest (the Proboszcz) Marcin Kladrzynski objected to the presence of the synagogue and halted its construction but Eisik, an obstinate veteran head of the Jewish community did not give in. He appealed to the bishop of Krakow Jakob Zadzik and, after negotiations lasting for years, the synagogue was built between 1640 to 1644.

From the outbreak of World War II and during the German occupation the Krakow municipality confiscated the synagogue, turning it into a

warehouse for the properties of the municipal theater. The synagogue was thus saved from destruction, unlike others in the city, such as the Alte Schul in Kazimierz--probably the oldest in Poland and built in a Romanesque style--which were burned to the ground. Even after the war the Krakow municipal theater continued to use the synagogue building as a warehouse. The Krakow Jewish community did not request that the building be returned since for the few survivors the three remaining synagogues--the famous Rema (built in 1553), the Kuppa Schul (inaugurated in 1643) and the Reform Temple (opened in 1844)--were adequate.

However, in July 1947 the municipal theater decided to vacate the building. They removed their props, cleaned the building and left it empty without notifying anyone. On July 27, known in the Christian calendar as St. Jacob's day, a group of priests from the Polish National Church, the underground organization of the Catholic Church in Poland took possession of the building. They led a group of Catholic worshippers who hung a picture of the Holy Virgin on the doors of the Ark of the Law and a large cross above the Ark and decorated the walls with holy pictures and Christian ritual symbols. They performed mass and after leaving the building hung another cross at the entrance. They declared that in the past the synagogue had been the Church of St. Jacob, that the Jews had converted the church to a synagogue and therefore the time had come to demand its return.

On that very same day, Mr. Sternberg, the head of the Jewish community telephoned me and in a voice filled with emotion told me what had happened. The following day I went to Krakow and immediately contacted

the Polish National Church center. Is it possible, I asked them, that what the Germans did to us was not enough--burning and destroying all our synagogues and all the Jews of Poland while the majority of the Polish population stood by apathetically? Now you come along, after the bloody war and without asking anyone, without permission of the Krakow Jewish community, just like the Germans, you convert this great ancient 17th century synagogue into a Christian church?

The bishop who was the leader of the Polish National Church replied with the familiar refrain: We the Polish National Progressive Church did not stand on the sidelines during the German occupation but helped the Jews as much as was possible. However we have historical documents which prove that we did not convert the syangogue into a church; on the contrary the Jews converted the church of St. Jacob into a synagogue.

I could see from the tense half hour discussion that the Polish side would not retreat from this new provocation. I also understood from various allusions that the seizure of the synagogue had been carefully planned by the Polish National Chruch and by the members of the Krakow municipal theater who had vacated the building without notifying anyone. I was almost certain the directors of the municipality knew of the plan and tacitly approved.

Upon returning to Warsaw I immediately called a meeting of the executive committee of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot. We prepared a strongly worded protest which we delivered to the minister of the interior, Wladyslaw Waleski, who appointed a committee of investigation chaired

by Jaroslaw Demianczuk, the director of the religious affairs department. This committee heard testimonies and gathered historical evidence, the proceedings dragging on until the end of the summer of 1948.

The Polish National Chruch relied upon a pseudo-scientific article by the Polish historian Dr. Juliusz Stanislaw Harbut whose thesis was that between 1772-1777 a church existed on the site of the synagogue. Those were the years when Krakow and its environs were under the Austrian rule and, according to Harbut, Kaiser Joseph II confiscated the church for use by the army, later selling it to the Jew Eisik Jekeles who used the building as a warehouse before converting it into a synagogue. Harbut based himself upon various questionable historic sources and his arguments are particularly ludicrous considering that Eisik Jekeles died in 1653.

We turned to the historian, writer and poet Meir Busak for his opinion on Dr. Harbut's concoction. Busak was a pupil of the famous historian of Polish Jewry, Meir Balaban (1877-1942), whose writings included a two-volume work on the History of the Jews of Krakow. Busak dealt with the subject objectively and from a purely historic perspective. Firstly he based himself upon objective and reliable Polish historians, including the historian Jan Dlugasz who was active in Krakow in the 15th century. In his book, written in Latin, he mentions the church of St. Jacobs but places it in the Christian sector of Kazimierz. The church stood near the gate which led to the town of Skawina. This is how it appears on maps of Krakow from the 17th century, with the Eisik Schul on the Jewish side of Kazimierz and the

church on the Christian side. As for Harbut's ridiculous contention that the Austrian Kaiser Joseph II sold the church to the Jews who then turned it into a synagogue, Bosak pointed out that while the Austrians ruled Kazimierz from 1772 to 1776, there is documentary evidence that in 1785 the church was still standing in the Christian sector of Kazimierz, one kilometer from the synagogue. Even the privilege granted by King Ladislas IV specifically mentioned the building of a synagogue rather than the conversion of another building. Furthermore, it is absurd to think that a Polish king would agree to converting a chruch into a synagogue.

In conversations with Polish statesmen and members of the committee I had the feeling that they would willingly adopt Dr. Harbut's thesis despite their doubts about its accuracy, because this was an opportunity to attack the Catholic church, which was openly opposing the Communist regime in Poland. Though they would gladly have supported the Polish National Church which waged a vehement battle against the Catholic church, we were on our guard.

Meir Bosak's evidence and conclusions were so clear and flawless that minister Waleski decided in our favor and ordered that the synagogue be returned to the Jewish community. The pictures of saints and the crucifixes disappeared. The synagogue was in our hands but where would we find the Jews to pray there, to pour out their embittered hearts to their Father in heaven?

The second case of seizing a synagogue also occurred in Krakow in 1941. The synagogue in question was a relatively new one in Szpitalna Street. Built before World War I, it had the reputation of being modern and respected. In the few years prior to World War II it became famous because of its well known cantor and composer Baruch Sperber. At the end of the winter of 1941 when the Jews of Krakow were moved to the closed ghetto the synagogue was surrounded by the Gestapo. The residents of the building, including the cantor, were ejected, taken away never again to be heard of. The key to the synagogue was given to a Ukrainian Orthodox priest who accompanied the Gestapo to the site and who had acted as an

informant. The synagogue on Szpitalna Street was converted into an Orthodox church and several Jews were murdered when the church was consecrated.

I learned of this matter after having dealt with the Eisik Jekeles synagogue at the end of the summer of 1948. Angered at the situation, I investigated the circumstances and discovered that an Orthodox church never existed in the Catholic city of Krakow because the residents would not tolerate its presence there. However, during the occupation, the Germans handed the synagogue to their Ukrainian ally, the Orthodox priest, and since then an Orthodox chruch exists in Krakow.

When I was in Krakow I visited this church--a former synagogue. The priest whom I met had been there only a year; nor was his predecessor the priest who originally took possession of the synagogue in 1941. The latter had apparently left Krakow with the Germans fearing that he would be tried for collaboration. Upon our submitting a complaint to the church secretariat the matter was referred to the district court in Krakow. I left Poland in 1949 and I believe that the church still exists to this day: "Would you murder and take possession?" (I Kings, 21:19)

Many otherwise unknown cities and towns in Eastern Europe left their impression in the annals of history because of the famous rabbis who were active there. One such case was that of Kutno, a town in the province of Lodz which became famous because of Rabbi Israel Joshua Trunk (1820-1893) known as Shaiele Kutner. All the synagogues and battei midrash in Kutno were destroyed except for the spacious beit midrash of Reb Shaiele Kutner. When Kutno was declared Judenrein the city council expropriated

the beit midrash turning it into a council center and a warehouse for the fire department. The few surviving Jews of Kutno requested that the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot intervene and demand that the municipality return the building. Meanwhile another shameful event occured. The survivors of Kutno erected a large memorial stone in the destroyed cemetery commemorating the Jewish martyrs and partisans. The unveiling ceremony was attended by many people from central Poland and I came in my capacity as chairman of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot. Also present were representatives of the municipal council, government and party officials, and many Poles from Kutno. All the speakers strongly denounced the cruelty of the Germans towards the Jews.

A few days later the memorial stone was shattered. The determined Jews of Kutno restored and even enlarged the memorial, but this too was smashed.

All this took place despite the Polish citizens' strong denunciation of their hooligan compatriots at the unveiling ceremony. Realizing what was expected of them, the Jewish survivors in Kutno packed up and left town. Not a single Jew was left to whom the beit midrash could be returned.

It is with a heavy heart that I must relate what happened to the famous Hakhmei Lublin Yeshiva founded by Rabbi Meir Shapira (1887-1934) in 1925. The building had an excellent library, spacious living quarters, dining and lecture halls. The yeshiva attracted students from all over the Jewish world and became a center for rabbinic education which recalled the golden age of Torah studies in Poland in the 16th and 17th centuries.

When I arrived in Lublin in November 1944 I found that the yeshiva had

been turned into a military hospital. The Germans had converted it into a military hospital during their occupation and after the war the Polish liberation army used it for a similar purpose. At the end of 1946 when I again visited Lublin I found the yeshiva building occupied by a Catholic university. A large cross hung at the entrance to the great central hall which was now used as the university's auditorium. Though students and teachers still strolled through the building, they were no longer the heads of Yeshivat Hakhmei Lublin and their pupils, whose bones are scattered in Belzec, Treblinka, Auschwitz or Majdanek.

I asked to see the rector of the university and was received by an old man who welcomed me politely and without asking why I had come, expressed his regret at the fact that he, the rector of the Catholic university, was obliged to receive a rabbinical representative of the Jewish faith in the building of a former yeshiva. The ensuing dialogue was a bitter one, in which I relentlessly expressed my feelings at being in a building which in the recent past had bustled with Jewish life and knowledge. I told him how the Jews at Poland felt regarding the behavior of the majority of the Polish populace during the German occupation, what was our reaction to the silence of the Vatican and the attitude of the official Catholic church in Poland. I asked him why was it that the Catholic and Protestant representatives of the church in Western Europe published pastoral letters to their flock warning them against collaboration with the enemy and instructing them to assist Jews in distressful situations while the Polish bishops were silent. Why did the metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Uniate Church in Lvov, Andrei Sheptytsky understand the need to issue a pastoral letter to his flock entitled "Thou shalt not kill"?

Attempting to defend his compatriots, the rector maintained that many priests had helped Jews by hiding them and had paid for this with their lives. He claimed that the German terror was much greater in Poland than in Western Europe. In the midst of this heated discussion I asked him: "How would you react if I demanded that you return the yeshiva building to us, the Jews?" He may have anticipated this question because he replied without hesitation: "If there were a sufficient number of rabbinical students we would, no doubt, have to consider the matter seriously. However I do not know how the ministry of education views the matter." At the end of our conversation he said: "What is your opinion, as a believing person, one who believes in the Creator? Do you think it would be better if the building were turned over to the atheistic Communists or if it were used as an educational institution, which, while indeed educating Christians, at least deals with young people who believe in God?"

Embittered, I left the building, seeing in my mind's eye another building--that of the famous Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau (Wroclaw) which, after the war, was used as a Communist youth center belonging to the Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Workers' Party). In Lublin in 1946 there were only 15 or 20 Jewish families but in Wroclaw there were many more Jews--most of them having returned from the Soviet Union. There are hundreds and perhaps even thousands of battei midrash and yeshiva buildings still standing or partially destroyed in Poland. Who cares? Who is interested in them?

The Rambam, the great rabbinic authority, taught us:

"Synagogues and battei midrash which were destroyed still retain their sanctity as is written `I will make your sanctuaries desolate' (Lev. 26:31)

Despite their being desolate they are still holy and just as one treats them respectfully when in use so too must one treat them in their desolation... If they are overgrown with grass one must uproot the grass and set it aside so that, seeing the grass, people's feelings would be aroused, leading them to rebuild the sanctuaries. (Rambam--Moses Maimonides; 1135-1204. Mishneh Torah--Yad ha-Hazakah--Hilkhot Tefillah Chapter 11, Halakhah 11)

THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY IN LVOV

The Jewish cemetery in Lvov dates from the beginning of the 15th century and perhaps even from the end of the 14th. No trace has been found of any other Jewish cemetery--neither within the boundaries of ancient Lvov nor in its suburbs. Therefore one can assume that from the date of the founding of the Jewish Kehillah in Lvov until its closure in 1885, the old cemetery alongside Szpitalna Street served the Jewish residents of Lvov i.e.those who lived in the city which constituted the first and main community as well as the community which resided in the suburb outside the city and was founded much later.

The first mention of the cemetery occurs in documents in the municipal archive of Lvov dating from 1414. These documents refer to a Jewish cemetery which had existed for sometime and constituted the border of a field belonging to a Christian who lived near the Jewish quarter. Since the Jewish street is mentioned in the official documents of Lvov municipality for the first time in 1383-1384 and there was no other cemetery in the city or its environs, the assumption that a Jewish cemetery existed in Lvov at the end of the 14th cemetery seems logical.

The cemetery as it existed before the Holocaust was a square between the streets of Rapoport, Szpitalna, Mejzlesza, Kilparowska. On the Szpitalna side stood the hospital founded by Lazarus, a Jewish old age home and the Burial Society's storerooms. Beyond these buildings was a densely wooded forest amidst whose tangled boughs several thousand grey gravestones protruded. The beginnings of the cemetery like that of the community itself, were restricted but in due course, with the development of the

community within and without the city and in the absence of any other cemetery even in the small communities surrounding the city, there was an urgent necessity to expand this cemetery. According to land purchase documents in the municipal archives, the leaders of the community purchased plots of land from their Polish neighbors or Ruthenians, until the cemetery reached it present size.

Part of the cemetery was enclosed by a fence and part by a wall, while at the entrance gate stood a tabernacle where memorial services were held, eulogies delivered and funeral processions began. It is difficult to ascertain whether the site also had a synagogue as was the custom. The synagogue near Szpitalna Street known as the "cemetery schul" was built in the 19th century. In the middle of the cemetery at the intersection of the paths stood the "Jewish Pantheon," where the rabbis, heads of yeshivot, and parnassim of Lvov and other communities who died in the city were buried. This custom was continued up to the closing of the old cemetery and thus we find gravestones from many periods.

Alongside the gravestones of the 17th century parnassim Nahman ben Isaac and his wife Roize (Di Gildene Roiz) and Mordechai ben Isaac, stood those of the 19th century parnassim; alongside the 14th century grave of Rabbi Joshua Falk Ha-Kohen is that of Rabbi Hayyim Kohen Rapoport, dating from the 18th century. The grave of Rabbi Jacob Meshullam Orenstein av bet din stands alongside that of his opponent Abraham Kohen rabbi of the Reform Temple in Lvov (1844) both of the 19th century.

Near this group were the graves of the Reiches brothers who died as martyrs "sanctifying the Name of God" (Kiddush Ha-Shem) in 1728. The

cemetery became severely overcrowded and eventually found itself in the center of the city. I heard from Dr. A. Zajaczkowski, a professor at the University of Warsaw and head of the Karaite community after World War II and other sources that the Karaites buried their dead in the Lvov cemetery until the end of the 15th century when they left the city to found such new communities in Eastern Galicia as Halicz, Dawidow and Kukizow. The elders of Lvov used to point to a narrow strip along the wall adjacent to Szpitalna Street as the burial site for the Karaite sect. The strip was empty of standing gravestones, it had broken stones and gravestones scattered about.

The cemetery was full of trees and bushes and from a distance looked like a wood. The trees were probably planted at the end of the 16th century and in the 17th century grew to such an extent that their branches and leaves formed a tent-like roof structure covering the graves and paths, thus imparting the ritual impurity conveyed by a corpse to whoever walked the paths under the branches. This affected Jews of priestly descent (kohanim) who must avoid contact with the dead.

This matter was the cause of a halakhic dispute between Rabbi Jacob Kapil ben Asher Ha-Kohen, av bet din and head of a yeshiva outside the city (1620-1630) and the great scholars of his generation. In the month of Elul 1620 Rabbi Kapil went to the cemetery to offer up supplications and while there noticed that there were many trees with their leaves bent over some of the graves. He therefore forbade kohanim to walk under these trees lest they be rendered ritually impure. Nearby were a number of community officials who were collecting charity for the blind, and when Rabbi Kapil told them of his ruling they replied that Rabbi Joshua Falk

Ha-Kohen (1555-1614) author of Sefer Me'irat Einayim, who was of priestly descent walked under these trees without any compunction. The dispute was joined by Rabbi Abraham ben Israel Jehiel Ha-Kohen Rapoport (1584-1651) a talmudist and halakhic authority (author of Etan ha-Ezrahi) and Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann ben Nathan Ha-Levi Heller (1579-1654) a Moravian rabbi and commentator on the Mishnah (Tosefot Yom Tov).

Nevertheless, Rabbi Kapil forbade the kohanim in his congregation to walk under the trees or even along the aisle upon which the trees threw their shadows and installed a special entrance for them. In consequence of the dispute, the kohanim from outside the city followed the stringent ruling of Rabbi Kapil, while those who lived in the city disregarded it.

Located in the center of the city, the cemetery was surrounded by Christian houses and courtyards. The historian Meir Balaban found that in 1588 there were 63 Christian houses and courtyards surrounding the cemetery. How, therefore, did the funeral processions get to the cemetery through the Christian quarters? The processions coming from all parts of the city had to pass two critical points: The Dominican Square (Plac Dominikanski) and the Krakow gate (Brama Krakowska). At the Dominican Square the processions often clashed with processions of priests and at the Krakow gate (corner of Krakowska-Startakowska Streets) sat crowds of rowdy Christians from the poorer classes.

Two instances will illustrate the situation. On Sunday August 10, 1631 a large crowd of celebrants by the Krakow gate blocked a Jewish funeral procession on its way to the cemetery. Leading the crowd were pupils from the metropolitan religious school, Jan Czech and Stanislaw Wyszmorski who

were joined by craftsmen and apprentices. They all chased the procession and catching up with it at the gate, attacked the mourners, severely beating them and also pillaging and destroying the buildings in the cemetery. The municipal police put a stop to the affair arresting the two leaders while the others fled.

The second instance took place near the Dominican's field on May 26, 1636. The funeral procession met with a Christian one, causing a clash between the two. According to the official Dominican complaint, the priest who held the holy wafers was pushed by the Jews. The Christians drew their swords and attacked the Jews, many of whom sustained head wounds and lost ears, remaining invalids for the rest of their lives.

These are but two of the many instances which clearly illustrate the indignities the Jews suffered while escorting deceased relations to their final resting place.

Here are details of some of the noteworthy gravestones:

The Gravestone of Yaakov Bahur

Yaakov Bahur's is said to be the oldest in the cemetery. the letters kof and het which are stressed on the inscription indicate the year i.e. 1348. The style of the inscription would seem to indicate a certain level of Torah knowledge which is difficult to accept because in the second half of the 14th century there were no yeshivot in Poland and the standard of Torah study was poor. Perhaps there was some other detail or sign which Gabriel Suchastewer overlooked in his book Holy Gravestones or

perhaps with time it was erased.

The Gravestone of Miriam Marisha

On the other hand there is no doubt about the date of a second gravestone belonging to the women Miriam Marisha. The inscription reads: "Here lies the honest and modest Miriam Marisha daughter of Samuel who died on Sunday the second of Tammuz kof mem le-elef ha-shishi. May her soul be bound up in the bond of life."

The equivalent Gregorian date of the gravestone is 1380 which, if compared with the date 1414 appearing for the first time in official documents of the Lvov municipality in relation to the Jewish cemetery near Szpitalna Street, enables us to determine with certainty that the old Lvov cemetery was founded at the end of the 14th cetury.

Incidentally, the name Miriam Marisha raises some questions, since it seems to indicate that in those days before the influx of Ashkenazi immigrants the Jews of Lvov spoke some sort of Slavic dialect.

The Gravestones of the Brothers Nahman and Mordecai the Sons of Isaac (Nachmanowicz)

The Nachmanowicz family were leaders of the Lvov community during the second half of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries. The head of the family Isaac ben Nahman (d. 1595) was a merchant and community parnas who built a synagogue at his own expense in 1582. The official name of the synagogue was Nahmans but the popular names were the Turei

Zahav or Di Gildene Rojse Schul (after Nahman's wife Rojse)

The text of their gravestones follows:

1. Nahman ben Isaac (d. 1616)

Now let us arise and lament
For here lies the magnificent jar of manna
Faithful shepherd, a holy man, generous and merciful
The great champion Nahman the son of Isaac
The master of the Holy Land, angel and officer
Chief spokesman before kings, officials and ministers
His mouth and tongue speak powerfully
With simple understanding and honest wisdom
He is not devoid of Torah for,
May the Lord be blessed, he is very learned in Torah
His good name will rise in esteem
He gave much charity from his fortune
The righteousness of his generosity will stand forever
He was also hospitable
And by virtue of this his soul will be bound up in the bond of eternal life Amen

2. Mordecai ben Isaac (d. 1635?)

Here lies a man of sound opinions
Our teacher Rabbi Mordecai the son of the rabbi and officer Isaac
He made it a rule to study Torah

Like the daily offerings according to their order
He also distributed his money to those near and far
A champion in Torah
An engaged leader of the community and country
He occupied himself faithfully with the needs of the community
And established yeshivot for the community as in the past
He labored to ransom captives as was required
He regularly sent money to the poor of Erez Israel
He fasted often
Contributed a building for the hospital
He contributed the cost of the dome for the expansion of the synagogue
Which he and his father and brother built
And his goodness cannot be measured
He built a hostel and contributed much money for the arrangement of marriages for poor brides
One cannot estimate the greatness of his benevolence and charity
And by virtue of this his soul will be bound up in the bond of enternal life
And his spirit and soul shall dwell in the shadow of the Lord
And may his virtue speak well for us and all Israel Amen

The text of the gravestones attests to public service. One should particularly note the attitude towards Erez Israel. In the case of Nahman he was referred to as the "master of the Holy Land" while it was said of Mordecai that "He sent money to the poor of Erez Israel." Both were "Presidents of the Holy Land," sending the contributions to their proper destinations. (It was customary to employ a trustworthy emissary, termed" president of Israel" in order to convey contributions from all over

Poland to Lvov and thence to the Holy Land).

3. Rojse the Daughter of Jacob--Wife of Nachman Son of Isaac

Known as the Di Gildne Rojse she participated in the struggle against the expropriation of the synagogue built by the Nachmanowicz family and was an energetic public figure. Many legends surround her life and this is the inscription on her gravestone:

Here lies a worthy woman, a champion and lady
Madame Rojse the daughter of Rabbi Jacob
Who died on Tuesday the fourth of Tishrei 5395
For this I lament because of the sorrow and sighing for the daughter of Jacob
He has lost his crown and is deprived of resourcefulness
The branches of the pure menorah are broken together with the calyxes and petals
Such a woman is a rare find
Kings received her and ministers bowed to her
May her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

The inscription on the gravestone attests to the fact the Rojse the wife of Nahman the son of Isaac died a natural death in 1635. There is no hint at a murder or martyr's death. The absence of the phrase "God will avenge her death" removes all doubt that the violent death is a fable. The people's love and admiration for her created the legend. Dr. J. Caro is of the opinion that over the years Rojse's name was confused with that of Adil of Drohobycz who did die a martyr's death. The following is the

inscription on her gravestone:

4. Adil of Drohobycz

On Friday the eve of Sabbath the 27th of Elul, 5470
The holy and pure Madame Adil daughter of the leader, teacher and rabbi,
Moshe Koknish was tried
And sanctifying the name of God
Gave her life for all of Israel
May God avenge her blood
And by virtue of this
May her soul be bound up in the bond of enternal life

Adil was executed in 1710.

5. The Gravestones of the Martyred Reiches Brothers

All of Israel will mourn God's conflagration
And the flashing fire that emerged
To divide organs and cut pieces of flesh
The head and the omentum for a fragrant aroma offering
The letter of the law has been stretched over us on the eve of Shavuot
This day of slaughter the shadow of night has been planted
Our face has been blackened
In the year 5488 woe is me that we saw such a sight
And a flame burst forth and consumed the foundations
The martyred brothers the rabbi and luminary
The great gaon, our teacher and rabbi

Hayyim, head of a yeshiva for two communities
The crown of Israel and its garland
Killed most cruelly and stabbed with a knife
And his younger brother Joshua
The moon shall be ashamed
For several years he fasted and died of thrist
And with an embittered soul
The rabbi and gaon our teacher
Rabbi Itshe Ber and our teacher and rabbi
Who heroically gave their lives to sanctify God's Name.
And they both went with equal dread
They were burned on a pyre
And the great and mighty awesome God did not want to save them
Their souls departed in holiness and purity
And their ashes recovered from the fire, are buried here
Collected and reposited like the ashes of Isaac
Forever a remembrance like the Ten Martyrs
By virtue of this
May their souls be bound up in the bond of eteranl life

The incidents with Adil of Drohobycz and the Reiches brothers are reminiscent of the persecution methods used by the Inquisition in Spain. The Latin Archbishop of Lvov who was also head of the Inquisition tribunal for the district of Lvov sentenced both Adil and the Reiches brothers to death.

RABBIS AND HEADS OF YESHIVOT

1.

God of retribution appear

And avenge the spilled blood of Your servant

That of our teacher, paragon of the generation, head of yeshiva, may his light shine

Rabbi, gaon, holy and pure

Menahem son of the rabbi our teacher Isaac of blessed memory

Who sanctified God who is great and awesome

And gave up his life for the Jewish community

And was severely put to death by reckless fellows

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 [1664]

Here in the suburb of Lvov

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

God will speedily avenge his spilled blood

And may his virtue speak for Israel

2.

Woe unto us

For our sins he died a dreadful and harsh death at the hands of the accursed

Our teacher, paragon of the generation, may his light shine

Head of a yeshiva, the gaon Eliezer son of Asher

Who was killed by reckless fellows

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 [1664]

Here in the holy community of the Lvov suburb

Because he taught Torah in Israel and raised many disciples

By virtue of which

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

The Lord is his inheritance

May he rest in peace

And may the Lord speedily avenge his spilled blood

3.

The crown has fallen from our head

The glory of our generation

The gaon, paragon of the generation

Our teacher the rabbi, may his light shine

Shimshon, the son of Rabbi Bezalel

Who died a dreadful and harsh death

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar in the suburb of Lvov

Because he taught Torah in Israel

He was an av bet din

Head of a yeshiva in several important and respected communities

Therefore the Lord of compassion will shelter him forever

Under the cover of His wings

And bind his soul in the bond of eteranl life

The Lord is his inheritance and will speedily avenge his spilled blood

4.

Here lies the gaon, paragon of the generation, head of a yeshiva

Our teacher and rabbi, may his light shine

Mashka the son of Rabbi Hayyim, of blessed memory

Who sanctified the Name of the Lord and gave up his life

Dying a dreadful and harsh death

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 [1664] in the suburb of Lvov

Because he taught Torah in Israel

By virtue of this

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood

5.

Here lies the Torah mantle

An object of our delight

The pure martyr, gaon and sage, paragon of the generation, may his light shine

Our teacher Mordecai the son of Rabbi Shelomo the head of a yeshiva

Because he sanctified the Name of Lord

And gave up his life dying a dreadful death

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar, 5424 [1664]

In the holy community of the Lvov suburb

Therefore by virtue of this

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood Amen

6.

Oh woe unto us

We have lost the object of our delight

Our glory, beauty and splendour

God of retribution avenge the blood of Your servants

The soul of our teacher and rabbi the great gaon, paragon of the generation

Son of our teacher and rabbi Yosef

He was the head of a yeshiva and an excellent dayan

Who gave honest and true judgments
Young in years but mature in wisdom
Dreadfully slain by the four types of death
And his blood flowed like that of a bull
Oh earth oh earth do not cover his blood
He was killed by dreadful methods
Stoning, burning, slaying and strangulation
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar
Therefore the Lord of compassion will shelter him forever under the cover of His wings
And he will be remembered like the ashes of Isaac and the Ten Martyrs
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

7.

God of retribution appear
Avenge the spilled blood of Your servants
A depraved crowd gathered
And in anger and fury killed the holy and pure gaon
Our glory and splendour, the great av bet din
Our teacher and rabbi Yehuda Lev
The son of our teacher and rabbi Shmuel Kohen Zedek Margaliot
Who was an av bet din in the holy congregation of Przemyslany
Where he practiced his leadership at a high level
And taught Torah in Israel
And toiled with the Torah as a lion, day and night
Oh mouth that grew strong in the Torah
Sentenced to a harsh and dreadful death
Therefore the Lord of compassion will shelter him forever under the cover

of His wings

And bind his soul in the bond of eternal life

The Lord is his inheritance

May he rest in peace

And may the Lord speedily avenge his spilled blood

May his virtue speak for all of Israel

8. The sons of David ben Shmuel Ha-Levi (Known as Taz from the initial letters of his work Turei Zahav; 1586-1667)

Sublime God, exalted above all

Avenge the spilled blood of Your servants

The brothers who were beloved and beautiful

The special one, the leader of the group the distinguished champion

Our teacher and rabbi Mordecai

And the other one the distinguished rabbi and hasid

Our teacher Solomon

Sons who were worthy of the great rabbi, our teacher Rabbi David

They studied Torah day and night

[two lines are erased]

Therefore God of retribution

Speedily avenge their spilled blood

And by virtue of this

May their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life

9. The gravestone of the Gaon Zevi Hirsch ben Jacob Ashkenazi (known as the Hakham Zevi; 1660-1718)

In the second month the luster of Torah was dimmed
And all the splendour departed
During the days of the first grape harvest
The great scholar's life came to an end
Abstinence and purity have died
Light has been extinguished
A bright holy light
A unique lamp of its generation
A generation which has lost its leader
A captain of angels
Minister of the capital
Our master, teacher and rabbi
The great rabbi, eminent gaon, famous hasid
Rabbi Zevi Hirsch the son of the oustanding rabbi
Our master, teacher, and rabbi Jacob
The light of his Torah shone on the holy congregation of Amsterdam
And the holy congregation of Hamburg
He was acknowledged as av bet din
And head of yeshiva in the holy congregation of Lvov and the province
Ascended to God on the eve of the second day of Rosh Hodesh Iyyar 5478

On the reverse side of the gravestone the text reads:

The generation is orphaned
He left behind none who resembled him
In wisdom and pure reverence for God
Royal officer of the Torah
He would send his instructions about halakhah berurah throughout the

world

And wrote books of responsa

And innovations on the Talmud, Rabbinic literature and the Bible

And columns of Rabbinic literature

Which sparkle like sapphires and a precious gem

He was wonderous in his wisdom

In Godly matters a great and wonderous Kabbalist

The commander of God's army

He readied his senses for the path of belief

And exposed himself to mortal danger

He guarded the faith against intrusions

Fortifying the wall of its stronghold and strengthening its boundaries

He will repose in the heavens

He will rest in a dwelling of peace

And may his soul be bound up in the spirit of the Lord his God

Reserved for him in the heavenly Garden of Eden

And his soul in the bond of eternal life

LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY

10.

Here lies the martyred and pure leader of the country

Our teacher and rabbi Shmuel

The son of Rabbi Yehuda

Who was sentenced to a dreadful death and murdered by the accursed one

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And may God speedily avenge him

11. and 12.

Here lies the martyred and pure parnas

Leader, officer and prince

Our teacher Shelomoh

Son of the gaon our teacher Rabbi Shmuel

Who was sentenced to a dreadful death and murdered by the accursed one

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And may God speedily avenge him

As well as his martyred son

Abraham son of the martyred Shelomoh

May God avenge his blood

13.

Here lies one whose understanding is perfect

The pure martyr, the head and leader of the country

The rabbi and eminent sage and prince

Our teacher and rabbi Mordecai

The son of the gaon, our teacher Yehiel Hakohen

Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the one and awesome God

By virtue of this

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood Amen

14.

Here lies the pure martyr, a great and respected man

The collector of charity in the new synagogue located in the suburb
Our teacher Rabbi David
The son of our teacher and rabbi Daniel
Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the one God
And was dreadfully slain by accursed and reckless fellows in the suburb
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424
Therefore by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood

15.

And Samuel served the Lord with love and veneration
He served the holy
And prepared his heart in front of the holy of holies
And before the pure lamp attuned his heart while praying
When suddenly he was sentenced to a dreadful and harsh death
Slain while praying by the accursed ones
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424
This man, distinguished in Torah
Our teacher and rabbi Shmuel
The son of our teacher and rabbi Yosef Chaiut
He was the cantor of the suburban synagogue
Who honored the Lord through his voice
Therefore God will speedily avenge his blood
And bind his soul in the bond of eternal life
And may he rest in peace

16.

God of retribution
Avenge the spilled blood of Your servant
And avenge our teacher the gaon Rabbi Shmuel
The son of our teacher and rabbi Shelomoh of blessed memory
Who gave up his life for the sanctification of God and was slain in Lvov
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar by accursed reckless fellows
Therefore by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

17.

Here lies one whose understanding is perfect
The pure martyr our teacher Jacob of blessed memory
Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the unique God
On the Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in Lvov
Therefore by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And God will avenge his blood

18.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Meir
The son of our teacher Menahem Hazan Halevi
Who suffered a dreadful death and gave up his life
For the sanctification of God
On the Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in Lvov
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And the Lord avenge his spilled blood

19.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Yizhak
The son of our teacher and rabbi Jacob
Whose blood was spilled like that of a bull
And who suffered a harsh and dreadful death
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in Lvov
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord speedily avenge his spilled blood

20. and 21.

Here lies the pure martyr our teacher Eliezer
The son of our teacher and rabbi Shmuel
Who gave up his life and suffered a dreadful death
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424
According to the order of the woodlogs and fire
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord speedily avenge his spilled blood
And his brother and pure martyr, paragon of the generation
Our teacher Rabbi Shelomoh
The son of our teacher and rabbi Shmuel
Who gave up his life and was slain
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

22.

Here lies the body of the pure and saintly martyr

Our teacher Rabbi Ozer
And son of our teacher and rabbi Shelomoh
Who gave up his life and was slain by accursed and reckless fellows
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov
Therefore by virtue of this
The Lord will avenge his spilled blood
And bind his soul in the bond of eternal life

23.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Shimon
The son of our teacher and rabbi Meir
Who gave up his life for the sanctification of God
And was slain by the accursed one
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in Lvov
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his blood

24.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Moshe
The son of our teacher and rabbi Shalom
Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the one awesome God
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424
Here in the suburb of Lvov was he harshly and dreadfully slain
Therefore by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his blood.

25. and 26.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Yizhak
The son of our teacher and rabbi Jacob
Who gave up his life and sanctified the great God in awe
And was slain by the accursed one
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in Lvov
And therefore by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And his brother the pure martyr our teacher Rabbi Zechariah
The son of our teacher Rabbi Jacob
Who gave up his life and sanctified the name of the one God
And whose blood was spilled like the blood of a bull
Therefore by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood.

27.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Eliezer
The son of our teacher Rabbi Avigdor
Who sanctified the name of the great and awesome God
And gave up his life on the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424
By virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the lord will speedily avenge his death

28.

Here lies one whose understanding was perfect
Who lived without blame and did what was right
The pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Hayyim

The son of our teacher and rabbi Moshe Halevi
Who gave up his life and was slain in sanctification of the Lord
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood.

29.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Moshe
The son of our teacher and rabbi Abraham
Who gave up his life and was slain in sanctification of the Lord
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in Lvov
His death was harsh and dreadful
And by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his spilled blood

30.

Here lies the pure martyr, our teacher Rabbi Baruch
The son of our teacher and rabbi Mordecai
Who gave up his life and was slain by accursed and reckless fellows
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will speedily avenge his death.

31.

Here lies the body of the saintly and pure martyr
Our teacher Rabbi Shalom
The son of our teacher and rabbi Nissan

Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the Lord with love and awe
and was slain by the accursed one
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424
Therefore by virtue of this
The Lord will bind his soul in the bond of eternal life
And he will rest in peace
And the Lord will avenge his spilled blood

32.

Here lies a young body, the pure martyr
Our teacher Rabbi Yizhak
The son of our teacher and rabbi Jacob
Who gave up his life and was harshly and dreadfully slain
For the sanctification of the one and awesome God
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov
By virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life
And the Lord will avenge his death.

33.

Here lies one whose understanding was perfect
The great sage the pure martyr
Our teacher Rabbi Azriel
The son of our teacher and rabbi Avigdor
Who gave up his life and was slain in sanctification of the unique God
Being harshly and dreadfully slain
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov
By reckless accursed fellows

Therefore by virtue of this

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And the Lord will speedily avenge his death

34.

Here lies the body of the pure, saintly martyr, a great man

The rabbi our teacher Rabbi Shimon

The son of our teacher and rabbi Meir

Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the Lord

And was slain by accursed and reckless fellows

On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov

Therefore by virtue of this

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

And the Lord will speedily avenge his death

35.

Here lies the martyred body of a great sage

The holy and pure teacher Rabbi Eliezer

The son of our teacher and rabbi Reuben Hakohen

Who gave up his life for the sanctification of the unique Lord

And was sentenced to a dreadful death

His body being burned on a pyre

On a day of troubles, the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424

Therefore the Lord of compassion will bind up his soul in the bond of eternal life

And will raise his memory in the ashes of Isaac and the Ten Martyrs

And the Lord will avenge his blood

And the spilled blood of His servants

And smell a pleasing odor Amen

36.

Lord of vengeance who wears the garments of vengeance
Avenge the spilled blood of Your servants which flowed like water
This tender wise lamb
Who was torn from a great and respected family
Diligent in his studies
And a sharp skilled controversialist in Talmudic debates
He had a heart as open as the door of an auditorium
He grew strong in Torah like a lion
His leadership was like that of a man of seventy
He toiled with the Torah
More than a student who had reached the age of one hundred
Of him it was said
"A worker sleeps whether he has [much] or little [to eat]
But the rich man's abundance [does not let him sleep"]
The verse refers to those who are abundant in Torah
He was slain by the accursed one
On the holy Sabbath 8 Iyyar 5424 in the suburb of Lvov
Our teacher Rabbi David
The son of Rabbi Yizhak Nachmish
Who was slain while still young by the bite of a snake
By virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life Amen

37.

Look to his roots

He placed a sign indicating his den
And he laid a foundation stone, a gravestone
Woe for this trumpet, this beauty in the land of cedars
This house of learning widely read and deeply learned
Only fifteen years-old, this great tamarisk
Brilliant and deeply learned
Hayyim the son of our teacher and rabbi Baruch
Who was slain by a depraved band of accursed and reckless fellows
Therefore the Lord of compassion will shelter his soul in the bond of eternal life
And the God of retribution will avenge his spilled blood
The Lord is his inheritance
May he rest in peace

THOSE SLAIN ON THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH OF IYYAR 5424

38.
Our eyes have darkened
Our treasure has been taken from us
The radiance of Zevi who was slain and stabbed to a dreadful death
The great rabbi, gaon, a champion in Torah, righteousness, purity and holiness
A great writer of Israel
An excellent Judge here in the city of Lvov
Our teacher Rabbi Zevi Hirsch
The son of our teacher and rabbi Abraham Katz
On 10 Iyyar 5424
Therefore the Lord of compassion

Will shelter him forever under the cover of His wings
And will bind his soul in the bond of eternal life
The Lord is his inheritance
And He will speedily avenge his spilled blood
And the blood of the martyrs
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

39.

And Abrahm prematurely and unjustly died
And was gathered unto his people
Justice is God's
God of retribution be jealous
And avenge the spilled blood of Your servants
When a depraved band gathered together
Killed and stabbed our leaders and holy ones
The great champion in Torah and reverence
Who taught Torah in Israel and trained many students
The great rabbi, the judge and head of yeshiva
Our teacher and rabbi Abraham
The son of our teacher and rabbi Solomon
A very pious man
He poured out his heart in prayer with all the 248 organs of his body
And his voice echoed that of the Levite singers in the Temple
He gave up his life in love and awe for God
And sancitified His great name
He was slain on the holy Sabbath 11 Iyyar 5424 in the city of Lvov
Therefore may his death in general atone for all of Israel
And God will avenge his blood

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

THOSE SLAIN ON THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH OF IYYAR 5424

40. and 41.

Jealous and avenging God who wears the garb of an avenger
God of retribution avenge the blood of Your servants
Which was spilled like water
When a depraved band gathered together and slew
On 13 Iyyar 5424 in their houses and cradles
The great rabbi, the leader, pure lamp, great in Torah, holy and pure
Our genius and pride, our teacher Rabbi Aharon
Son of our teacher Rabbi Lapidot, may the Lord comfort him
All his days he spent studying and trained many students
And he was a great and excellent Judge and a man of great piety
Who served the Lord with all his heart and soul
And his prayers were recited with all the 248 organs of his body
Sanctifying the name of the great and awesome God
And his modest pious, holy and pure wife Raizel
The daughter of our teacher and rabbi Jacob of blessed memory
God will speedily avenge their spilled blood
And by virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

42. and 43.

God of retribution avenge the spilled blood of Your servants
He will avenge the blood of the martyrs

Who gave up their lives
For the sanctification of the awesome and unique God
Alas! alack! men of faith have been lost
And there is no one to stand in the breach and build a fence
Here are two distinguished holy, pure and pious brothers
Great in Torah learning and holiness
Our teacher and rabbi Yizhak and our teacher and rabbi Eliezer
Sons of the champion the gaon our teacher Rabbi Elijah Rash
They spent their time in the tents of Torah
Studying with students on a regular basis
They were keen and sharp-witted
Alas, they too were slain by the accursed one
And suffered dreadful deaths
On 14 Iyyar 5424
May God speedily avenge their blood
And bind their souls in the bond of eternal life
The Lord is their inheritance
May they rest in peace

THE SLAIN ON THE TWENTIETH OF SIVAN 5424

44.
Lift up your voices in lamentation and wailing
For the tree of life which was cut down in these few years
For it was holy fruit, the tree of life to eat and drink
He was very great in Torah
Working tirelessly at it like a student who was one hundred years-old

Suddenly dreadful death

The great wise, distinguished rabbi our teacher and rabbi Hayyim

Son of our teacher and rabbi Mordecai

Who was slain on the 20th of Sivan 5424

The Lord will avenge his blood

And bind his soul in the bond of eternal life

And may he rest in peace Amen

45.

For this our heart grieves and we were appalled

For God beat us soundly and took from us the crown of our head

The diadem of our splendour the light of the diaspora

The gaon, our teacher Rabbi Abraham

Son of the champion and gaon our teacher Rabbi Joseph Katz

Head of a yeshiva in the holy congregation of Kolomyia

He was taken away because of our sins

And harshly and dreadfully slain by the accursed one

And he sanctified the unique God in awe

Therefore the Lord of compassion

Will shelter him forever under the cover of His wings

And will speedily avenge his blood

Because he taught Torah in Israel and trained many students

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

The martyrs from the city of Lvov are not mentioned in Gabriel Suchastewer's book except for Hayyim the son of Mordecai who was slain on the twentieth of Sivan 5424. It would seem that these victims were buried elsewhere in the cemetery and we shall never know the location.

kah7

GRAVESTONES--DECORATION AND SYMBOLISM

The gravestones in the ancient cemetery of Lvov are examples of religious art which contain a rich variety of decoration and ornamentation with many symbolic shapes and forms.

They usually consist of an upright stone the top of which is either in the shape of a half circle or a triangle. The most commonly used stone was sandstone (sandstein). These are gravestones where the most prominent element of ornamentaion is the epitaph and the motifs are reminiscent of decorations on ancient Torah ark curtains with the two pillars on the sides. Generally the fauna and flora or other symbols appear in the upper half circle or triangle but sometimes in the general frame as well.

The following symbols are some of the better known and more extensively used by the Jews of Poland and are carved on the gravestones in the old cemetery in Lvov: The Kohen's hand raised in priestly blessing indicating that the deceased was a Kohen; the laver (or pitcher) and a musical instrument indicating that the deceased was a Levite, a charity box indicating that the deceased was charitable; an unrolled scroll with a goose feather indicating that the deceased was a scribe.
A lion on the gravestone of someone whose name was Arie-Lev; a deer (Zevi) for someone whose name was "Hirsch"; a menorah or burning candles on the grave of a modest woman; a broken tree symbolizing someone whose life was cut off in its prime, a Torah crown for a scholar learned in

Torah: an open book with the name of the work inscribed symbolizes a great person and author. An open Ark of the Law surmounted by a Torah crown symbolizes a rabbi or head of Yeshiva.

Other than these more commonly known symbols there are gravestones in the old Lvov cemetery which have heraldic motifs: Fish decorate the gravestones of the Kiknish family which symbolizes their relation to the prophet Jonah--in the upper part of the gravestone, the half circle or triangle, there is a beautiful carving of two fish.

Here are a few examples:

1. Levi the Son of Isaac Kiknish

The angels have siezed the Ark of the Law
They have defeated the righteous
The crown of our head, the diadem of Israel has been taken from us
The commander, the gaon, the eye of the diaspora
Our teacher and rabbi Levi
The son of the gaon our teacher Rabbi Jacob Kiknish
A scion of the prophet Jonah
Av bet din and head of a yeshiva in Lvov
Alas we have lost a righteous man
Who practiced justice and righteous deeds in Israel
And taught Torah in Israel and trained many pupils
Alas for this shofar who decays in the earth
By virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

Died on the first day of Passover, 5263

This is an interesting gravestone according to Suchastewer, and unfortunately we have no other source. It is an ancient gravestone and the first one we have of an officially appointed rabbi who served as an av bet din and head of a yeshiva in Lvov in 1503. According to the text on the gravestone he taught Torah and trained many pupils. One can assume that he was one of the refugees coming from the west who brought with him a deep knowledge of Talmud and laid the foundations for Torah study in Poland. Nathan Dembizer writes in his book Kellilat Yofi (Krakow, 1388, pages 37, 38) "We cannot conceal the truth of saying that even before the gaon our teacher and rabbi of blessed memory (Kalman of Worms d. 1560) we find in Lvov a head of yeshiva and av bet din a leader, our teacher, Rabbi Levi the son of the gaon our teacher Rabbi Jacob Kiknish, of blessed memory, who was also known as Rabbi Levi the doctor, died on the first day of Passover 5263 [1503]. However this rabbi is not mentioned in any sources nor is he known among the writers of responsa such as the gaon, our teacher Rabbi Kalman of blessed memory whose name was known in the Jewish communities world over."

2. Abraham ben Yehiel of Kolonya (two fish carved at the head of the gravestone)

And Abraham returned to his source
And God made a convenant with him saying
This righteous man has come to My abode
This is Abraham in his righteousness from first to last
Angels rejoiced at his presence

Mortals bemoned his departure
He was joyous and acted righteously and justly
The champion who was great in Torah
Our teacher, Rabbi Abraham of Kolonya
The son of our teacher, Rabbi Yehiel and great dayyan here
Who was one of the expelled from Portugal
A pious man from Provence
A scion of the prophet Jonah
He performed honest judgments, taught the law all of his days
And sat studying in the tent of Torah in the yeshiva at Ramah
And ascended to God on the first day of Tabernacles 5282
By virtue of this
May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

Abrham the son of Yehiel from Kolonya "one of the expelled from Portugal and pious of Provence" was another person who came to Lvov from the west, founded yeshivot and raised the knowledge of Talmud in Poland to the status of that in France during the period of the Tosafists (from 12th to 14th century) in France and Germany. He died in 1522.

3. Yohanan Baruch the Son of Simhah-Rofe

O fearsome great darkness has descended upon us
On the day the diadem has been removed from our head
Our master and father
The great wise one
For whom the convenant with Torah and mitzvot was an honor
His name was our teacher and rabbi Yohanan Baruch from Jonah, Ha-Rofe

An expert

The son of our teacher Rabbi Simhah

Who died on the 14th, 5620

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

4. Simhah Menahem son of Yohanan Baruch-rofe

Here lies the chief and prince in Israel

The famous officer in his generation

The expert doctor of the masses

He extended his help to the poor and wretched

Collected charity to strengthen Jerusalem

The great master and minister

Our teacher Rabbi Menahem the son of our teacher

Rabbi Yohanan Baruch from Jonah, of blessed memory in the world to come

May his soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life

5. Eliezer the Son of Yohanan Baruch-rofe (Samekh Gimel)

Died before his time

The man of great wisdom

The expert doctor for many

Our teacher Rabbi Eliezer

The son of our teacher Rabbi Yohanan Baruch from Yonah...

Died on Rosh Hodesh Elul 5432 [1672]

The famous and distinguished family of physicians, Yohanan Baruch and his two sons Simhah Menahem and Eliezer, "Di-Yonah," were very active on

behalf of their brethren in Poland at the end of the 17th century. All the luminaries of the generation, the TAZ and others, praise them and stress their devoted work on behalf of their brethren. They particularly mention Simhah Menahem (Emanuel) known by the people as "Simhat Doctor" who was the Sultan's doctor and later until 1696 physician to the Polish king Jan Sobieski. In 1689 he donated to the "Turei Zahav" synagogue a large bronze menorah, made by a craftsman from Broclow whose name was inscribed on it. (In 1942 when the accursed Nazis destroyed the synagogue they removed the menorah). In the years 1697 to 1702 Dr. Simhah Menahem was twice president of the Council of Four Lands.

I have presented several examples of gravestones from the Kiknish family "scions of Jonah the prophet", which have two fish inscribed upon almost all of their gravestones. G. Suchastewer and the scholar Karmoly in his book "The Crows and Sons of Jonah" try to prove that they were scions of the prophet Jonah, basing this on the fish (Jonah's fish) which appear on their gravestones and that the name Kiknish is a derivative of "Jonah's Kikayon". Scientifically it is difficult to take this evidence seriously.

Since most of the members of the family are from the 16th century and are doctors by profession it is possible that the fish depicted on their gravestones were a sort of family heraldic symbol which in later years became a professional symbol. The same holds true for the crown on the gravestones of the Rappoport family. I have not been able to find a satisfactory explanation for the name Kiknish. Dr. Yehezkael Caro, in his book "The History of the Jews in Lemberg" (p. 178) postulates that Kiknish comes from a woman's name Kika as for example Reizelesh from Mareize, Hanalish from Hannah, Friedelish from Frieda. However I do not

find this convincing because then the family name should have been Kiklis and not Kiknish. I think that the early members of the family brought the name to Poland from the west and therefore one must look for the meaning of the name in their country of origin.

The only source from which we can obtain information about the old cemetery in Lvov is from Suchastewer's book Holy Gravestones--booklets which were published in Lvov in the years 1860, 1863, 1865 and 1869. Unfortunately Suchastewer had no idea of how to apply scientific research methods to his work. Consequently he merely copied the texts of the various gravestones combining them with stories, sermons and eulogies. His book is the work of an amateur, a Jew from Lvov for whom the past, and the memory of the great men and their time from the city of his birth were close to his heart. Unfortunately we cannot always rely upon him. He allowed his imagination to run away with itself, adding, deleting and distorting without realizing that he was doing this. However despite these drawbacks his work is still important.

Shelomo Buber, J. Caro, Meir Balaban and Reuven Margaliot all point out his mistakes distortions and faults but they all use his book as a basis for reference because it is the only surviving record which contains information about the old cemetery in Lvov. In the inroduction to his book Anshe Ha-Shem Shelomo Buber said he would donate all the income from his book for the establishment of a special committee which would deal with copying the texts of the gravestones in the old cemetery. Va'ad ha-Kehillah in Lvov made several decisions to implement Buber's suggestion and even set aside a special budget for this purpose but nothing came of it.

In January 1942 the Judenrat in Lvov decided to deal with the matter because the Germans had already begun destroying the cemetery. A joint committee, established by the Department for Religious Affairs and the Department for Cultural Affairs, set about doing the work. The copying was done intermittently until the big Aktion of August 1942. In the Fall of 1942 the Germans began to destory the cemetery systematically. Some of the gravestones were brought to the Janowska camp and some were brought to the former Cadets school on Kadecka Street. In both places, Jewish prisoners who had been condemned to death paved the streets with these gravestones. And "I am the man who has known affliction under the rod of His wrath;" as a prisoner of the Janowska camp, with my own hands, I paved the sidewalks of Kadecka Street.

I do not know what happened to the documents containing the texts of the gravestone inscriptions. They were probably destroyed together with the remaining Jews of Lvov when the ghetto was eliminated on June 5, 1943. Oh what a pity for the irretrievable which is not forgotten.

THE JEWISH CEMETERIES IN POLAND

The members of Va'ad Ha-Kehillot and the Jewish communities were concerned at the neglected state of the Jewish cemeteries in the entire country. Eighty-six Jewish communities were active in post-war Poland and each did whatever it could to preserve the cemeteries. But what of the thousands of deserted cemeteries scattered all over Poland?

Thousands of cities and towns were Judenrein ("Cleansed of Jews") and the Polish neighbors started commandeering the sites, uprooting the gravestones to pave their yards, dismantling the fences and pasturing their livestock amongst the graves. In some cities and towns the municipalities unilaterally decided to destroy parts of the cemeteries, to open graves and remove the skeletons in order to build a new road or path or build a new factory or park.

At every meeting of the Va'ad Ha-Kehillot the abandoned cemeteries appeared on the agenda. The truth is we did not have the resources to deal with this gigantic problem which required a task force of dedicated people with a budget of millions. Thousands of emotional strings tie those abandoned graves to Polish Jews in other parts of the world yet, it is amazing that to this day not a single Jewish organization, whether public or rabbinical, has been established to seriously deal with the subject of the cemeteries which also has many halakhic problems. Since halakhah teaches us to behave with great respect towards the deceased, there is a very strict prohibition on removing and transferring bones without the supervision of a rabbi.

The "disfigurement of the dead" is a great transgression, yet here we have thousands of graves being broken open and the bones of our ancestors trampled under the feet of cattle.

Some time ago a group of American Jews of Polish extraction took an interest in the problem. They went to Poland, visited several cemeteries, saw the destruction and turned to the Polish government which had passed a law prohibiting the ongoing demolition of the cemeteries. Though they were courteously received by Polish government officials who made many promises, to this day nothing has been done. The members of the Jewish delegation were photographed and, upon returning to the United States, called a press conference--and with that the matter ended.

In 1948 I submitted a memorandum to William Bein, the director of the Joint Distribution Committee in Poland, in which I suggested a solution for the problem of the desecrated cemeteries in Poland. I pointed out that the current sad situation would continue to deteriorate. Neither government nor municipal authorities in Poland were able to prevent the destruction of thousands of cemeteries. To tell the truth, they have not even shown any serious intention of dealing with the matter. On the contrary, there is evidence that Poland is interested in obliterating all historical traces of Jewish presence in the country. If we do not take the matter in hand no one else will deal with it. I therefore suggested dividing Poland into twelve districts, choosing one central city in each district and then collecting and transferring the bones from all the cemeteries in each district to a mass grave in that city. Only one or two permanent watchmen would be required for each central cemetery. All this was conditional upon the Torah sages discussing the program and giving

their approval.

The halakhah is very stringent about forbidding the removal of bones from the grave. In the Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah 363, aleph, a whole chapter is devoted to the prohibition of removing a corpse or bones from its grave. However, the prohibition is qualified in cases where there is apprehension about the possibility of the graves being desecrated or where there is danger that they may be flooded. Then it is mitzvah to remove the bones to prevent the desecration of the grave.

THE JEWISH CEMETERIES AS SEEN BY THE CONTEMPORARY POLISH HISTORIAN--PRZEMYSLAV BURCHARD

For thousands of years it was customary for the Jews to concern themselves with the proper burial of their dead. This concern stemmed not only from belief in ressurection but also from specific mitzvot in the Bible and Talmud. Consequently every community would consecrate a cemetery, fence it off and protect it. Sometimes consecrating a cemetery preceeded the building of a synagogue. When a cemetery became full a new one was consecrated. Large and ancient communities had two, three and even four cemeteries. A proper burial was guaranteed even to the childless and the poorest of Jews thanks to the Hevra Kaddisha ("Burial Society") which operated in almost every community on virtually official basis.

The villagers have several names for the Jewish cemetery: Krarkut, Kirkut, Krahul, Charchol and others. The Jews called their cemeteries bet olam ("house of the world") bet hayyim ("house of life"), bet ha-kevarot (house of burial"). In Yiddish: der gutart ("the excellent place"), der heilige art ("the holy place"). Those interested in obtaining information about Jewish cemeteries in western countries will find in the German chronicle the following names: Juden-sand ("Jewish Sand"), Sandhof ("courtyard of sand") or Juden Kirchhof ("Jewish Church Courtyard") which is a derivative of Kirkhof which is our popular name Kirkut. In Latin texts we find names like hortus Yudeorun ("Jewish garden") or Unds Yudaicus ("Jewish mountain"). In contemporary Polish texts the name frequently used is cmentarz ("cemetery") since it refers to a site used for burying the dead.

It is difficult to say how many Jewish cemeteries have been preserved to date. In the guide which I compiled there are 890, but I am sure this is not the true total. Recording the cemeteries was easier than recording the synagogues, even though apparently (but only apparently) the opposite should have been the case. I recorded not only those that still exist but also those without a trace: In their stead are houses, gas stations and parks. However, for believing Jews the cemetery is eternal, even if it was destroyed out of vanity or barbarism.

The degree of survival amongst the cemeteries varies. In some of them, for example, Lodz, Worzlow, Krakov and Warsaw, there are thousands--even tens of thousands of gravestones--while in others there are but tens or hundreds. There are some cemeteries without gravestones though clear traces can be found on the site.

There are many Jewish cemeteries in villages and towns and even cities where I wrote two words on my index card, "no traces." Sometimes only the gravestones could be found, but in other places there was no trace of the cemetery. During the occupation the Germans tried to destory all traces of Jewish culture and therefore to obliterate the cemeteries. Many gravestones were carted to other sites and used for building pavements, to strengthen roads, as flood barriers and building foudations. If I received information about the location of gravestones which were barbarically abused in this way, I recorded this in my directory.

Those who wish to take responsibility for the cemetery in their place of residence can try to retrieve the gravestones and return them to the

cemetery. If the gravestones are smashed they can use the pieces for constructing a memorial monument as was done in Kazimierz nad Wisla, Sandomierz, and Makow-Mazowiecki.

The barbarism against the cemeteries was perpetrated not only by the Nazis during the war but also after the war, when local authorities, whether out of ignorance or ill will, desecrated or destroyed Jewish cemeteries. So, for example in 1970 in Bubolice (district of Koszalin) at the initiative and instruction of the local committee of the former P.Z.P.R - Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (United Polish Labor Party) a beautiful and ancient cemetery containing many historical gravestones was destroyed. Recently on Na Wzgorzu Street in Gdansk the "shameful steps", as the more enlightened citizens of the city call them, were built. In Radzilow (district of Lomza) the previous administration erected a garbage dump on the site of the cemetery. In Bulslewicz (district of Kalisz) the authorities not only permitted the removal of garbage to the cemetery site but also faeces. In Subinia and Zivry (district of Siedlve) the citizens took some 500 gravestones from the neighborhood and used them in their yards to prop up the earth--and those can be seen to this day. In Szczercow (district of Piotrkow) they dug up sand from the cemetery (only four gravestones remained). they did the same in Zlow--transporting sand mixed with human bones to government building sites. In Poznan there is a swimming pool in the synagogue which the Germans installed in 1940. However, even after the war this situation aroused no reservations or guilt feelings in the authorities.

However, in the notes of my directory the reader will find not only instances of thoughtlessness and barbarism but also some positive facts

, as well--tending and protecting the remanents of Jewish culture, usually at the initiative of independent social groups.

Regarding the cemeteries there is another point which should be investigated. Many authors writing on this subject us the word mazevah transliterated in Polish letters. In my directory I use the Polish term Nagrobek because Jewish cemeteries in Poland contain not only the conventional gravestones but also other forms. The mazevah is a stone placed flat on the grave while a Nagrobek is a perpendicular stone slab placed on the mazevah. The ancient gravestones were rectangular slabs without decoration having only inscribed Hebrew text. In time the Jews began to chisel a headstone in the shape of a triangle or half circle and other shapes, which were placed on the flat slab. On this headstone they sculpted decorations (and other fashionable motifs) which occasionally appeared on the flat stone as well. The texts were usually in Hebrew. In some rare instances there were gravestones in the shape of sarcophagi and mausoleums (small buildings like those over the graves of saintly sages). However, in the cemeteries of large cities, particularly the districts of Prussian conquest, gravestones in the shape of obelisks and other forms are not unusual--as well as inscriptions in German, or, for example, in Warsaw and Lodz--in Polish. There are also gravestones cast in iron. Since the gravestones are not uniform in style and shape I saw fit to use the more universal term of Nagrobek even though I was sure that we were dealing only with gravestones.

A MEDALLION AND MEMORIAL

This medallion is a small monument for the glorious Jewry whose memory will not cease from our hearts nor desist from our offspring.

The artist, Nathan Karp, depicts on one side of the medallion the vibrant and meaningful life of Polish Jewry and on the other side the tragic destruction, the valley of slaughter. The common denominator of both sides of the coin is the wandering Jew who finds no rest in the diaspora. Always walking towards the east he will not rest until he reaches the state of peace and plenty in Erez Israel.

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